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ABSTRACT

This training guide is intended to help Head Start staff develop the essential partnership-building skills that contribute to Head Start's overall effectiveness as a supportive, family-centered community. Each of the guide's three modules details module outcomes, key concepts, and background information. Module 1 defines family support in terms of principles and practices, and provides activities to clarify the ways staff and the agency can move forward in showing families that they are part of a caring Head Start community. Building blocks for developing a community of family support are discussed, practiced, and assessed by staff. Module 2 addresses essential skills for working with families by giving staff the opportunity to examine and practice two essential skills for building partnerships with families: (1) partnership talk; and (2) joining with a family. This module also encourages skill development in addressing challenging behaviors that may surface in individuals during staff-family meetings, and situations which may impede the partnership-building process. Module 3 addresses mobilizing family strengths. The guide's section on continuing professional development provides activities for expanding and reinforcing staff skills in family support. Contains 12 resources, including books, journals, newsletters, information systems, organizations, and audiovisual materials. (SD)

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HEAD START

Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community

ED 407 140

A Design for Family Support

PS 025378

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Head Start Bureau

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HEAD START®

A Design for Family Support

Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Head Start Bureau

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Photo courtesy of Rosemount Head Start, Washington, D.C.

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Preface

Imagine . . .

. . . A young mother going for support and encouragement when she feels overwhelmed by her responsibilities at home.

. . . A father and his children dropping in for a hot lunch, visiting with other parents while the children play, and getting some professional advice about a child's health care.

. . . A parent completing a drug treatment program and going to find available community resources to support her family.

. . . Family members developing their own education goals and a plan for reaching them.

. . . A group of parents sitting and talking with a professional about how to help their children cope with violence in their neighborhood.

Imagine . . .

. . . Caring staff members recognizing how difficult it is to raise children and praising parents for their efforts.

. . . A health aide accompanying a pregnant mother to a health clinic for her first prenatal visit because she is nervous about going alone.

. . . A coordinator sending a home visitor to a young father's apartment to talk about child rearing, teaching him how to stimulate his child's development, and connecting him with the special services his child may need.

. . . A family service worker giving support to a young couple when they are having trouble with their children and don't know what to do next.

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Preface

The opposite page[1] illustrates the concept of family support — a concept that is alive and well in Head Start agencies across the country. As you can see, family support aims to keep families healthy and intact through a broad range of preventive and supportive services delivered with flexibility, personalized attention, and cultural sensitivity. All family support programs work toward the basic goal of strengthening families to ensure the well-being and healthy development of the next generation.

Head Start, since it was initiated in 1965, is often known as the "pioneer" in the family support movement. Head Start was the first to design a national educational program acknowledging the interrelatedness of health, nutrition, parent involvement, family services and children's learning. During the last two decades, there has been an explosion of family resource centers, family support programs, and parent education programs across the United States. Family support is now a national movement, coming from a variety of sources.

Head Start has much to contribute to this movement, and also needs to learn from it. This guide invites you, as managers, to no longer just imagine a supportive community for families. Instead, you can enhance your agency's current family support efforts and become instrumental to future generations by giving staff the skills needed to embrace and work with families.

Head Start now has an opportunity to become an integral, integrated agency in the continuum of community agencies, and a leader in the family support network emerging in communities across the nation. But, to meet its mission, and to help its families, it needs to continue learning new skills and acquiring knowledge on family support.

We invite you to be a part of this exciting movement, begun on the grass roots level, which is now reshaping efforts to strengthen children and their families.

[1]Adapted with permission from Mary Lee Allen, Patricia Brown, and Belva Finlay, *Helping Children by Strengthening Families- A Look at Family Support Programs.* (Washington, DC: Children's Defense Fund, 1992).

Overview

Purpose

Head Start was born, and has survived, with the kind of spirit and determination that lives in the hearts of all young children. Head Start is about the future. Perhaps more than any other social program in its time, it is a symbol of hope for a better life for low-income children and their families.

—Advisory Committee on Head Start Quality and Expansion,
Creating a 21st Century Head Start

As presented by the Advisory Committee in *Creating a 21st Century Head Start,* Head Start agencies embrace families and encourage them to achieve a better life — a life where families not only meet but exceed their basic responsibilities. Head Start, therefore, serves as a network of support complementing, not assuming, such basic responsibilities as economic support, health care and protection, education and socialization, and family maintenance. We call this network family support.

Skilled staff play a significant role in helping families achieve goals for a better life. This guide, *A Design for Family Support*, gives staff the essential partnership-building skills that contribute to Head Start's overall effectiveness as a supportive, family-centered community. The skills are especially relevant for staff who work directly with Head Start families. These staff have critical roles, individually and as part of team interactions with families, to promote and sustain supportive partnerships.

Audience

Target audiences for this guide's training program are:

- **Head Start staff** directly involved with families, including staff working in the areas of family and community partnerships, education and early childhood development, and child health and development.
- **Teachers and caregivers** as they conduct home visits and partner with parents to support children's development.
- **Program managers and coordinators** as they help staff evaluate their skills and pursue plans for continuing professional development.

Trainer or Coach Selection

In planning this guide's training session(s), management staff should carefully select the person or persons who will conduct the workshops and/or coaching sessions. Trainers and coaches should be experienced in delivering training sessions. Candidates need to be trained in family-focused work, and promote a "family strengths" model. They should have experience in family counseling and in service delivery to low-income families of diverse cultural backgrounds. Candidates may be found in colleges and universities that offer programs in social work, family support, family preservation, and family therapy. Or, they may be located in local community agencies such as Head Start, family resource centers, family support programs, and parent education programs.

Introduction

Performance Standards

A major goal of Head Start is to support families. To accomplish this goal, the guide's training activities help staff meet Performance Standards requiring them to:

- **Form** relationships with families aimed at improving the conditions and quality of family life;
- **Help** families identify and use resources to support them in dealing with demanding or stressful situations;
- **Contribute** to the development of children by offering families support in carrying out parenting responsibilities;
- **Employ** strategies for helping families address their concerns, deal with challenges effectively, and achieve their goals; and
- **Be** a family advocate so that families receive needed assistance from the Head Start agency and the broader community.

Organization

A Design for Family Support is part of a series of training guides developed to build the capacity of Head Start staff who work directly with families. As a technical guide, it builds on the foundation guide, *Building Supportive Communities*, by focusing on the complex skills necessary for developing and maintaining an environment of family support.

By completing the activities in this guide, participants will achieve the following **guide outcomes:**

- **Apply** principles of family support to their daily work;
- **Demonstrate** the skills necessary for forming supportive partnerships with families;
- **Develop** creative approaches for providing support to families; and
- **Assess** their own skills in working effectively with families and establish plans for professional development accordingly.

This guide is divided into a series of modules. Each module has specific outcomes for participants to achieve. The **module outcomes** evolve from the guide outcomes. The module's **background information** provides a context for trainers on the **key concepts** (the activity's main ideas) covered in the module. The guide includes the following modules:

- **Module 1:** ***What Is Family Support?***

  This module defines family support in terms of principles and practices. The activities help clarify the ways staff and the agency can move forward in showing families that they are part of a caring Head Start

community. Building blocks for developing a community of family support are discussed, practiced, and assessed by staff.

- **Module 2:** ***Essential Skills for Working with Families***

  In this module, staff have the opportunity to examine and practice two essential skills for building partnerships with families: 1) "partnership talk"; and 2) "joining with a family." It is through partnership talk and joining with a family that the building blocks to family support, presented in Module 1, can be more readily achieved by staff. This module also encourages skill development in addressing challenging behaviors that may surface in individuals during staff-family meetings, and may impede the partnership-building process.

- **Module 3:** ***Mobilizing Family Strengths***

  Staff, able to bring a strengths perspective to families, are the core of a supportive Head Start community. In this module, staff examine and practice strategies for drawing out and reinforcing family strengths. These strategies include: 1) exploring and affirming family strengths during conversations with families; 2) using language that spurs positive images of families; 3) applying the art and skill of "reframing"; and 4) tapping key players in the lives of families as sources of support.

Follow-up training strategies, or **next steps: ideas to extend practice**, are located at the end of each module. These activities help participants review key information, practice skills, and examine their progress.

Training options are provided in this guide so that management teams can respond to the different learning styles of staff. Some local Head Start agencies may want to provide the guide's training program in the workshop format; others may want to use the coaching format; and still others may want to use a combination of both. These training strategies are described in the **Definition of Icons** section.

The **Continuing Professional Development** section lists activities that agencies may find useful for reinforcing and expanding staff skills in family support.

A **Resources** section, located at the end of the guide, describes books, journals, newsletters, information systems, organizations, and audiovisual materials that offer in-depth information on the topics covered in this guide.

Instructions

Before conducting the activities in this guide, prepare for the training event by reviewing the following:

- **Familiarize** yourself with each module's key concepts and background information. These sections provide a conceptual framework to support successful training delivery.

- **Ensure** the achievement of the module outcomes by completing all the module activities for either strategy, coaching or workshop. While each activity is written to stand alone, most activities within the module are sequential and build on previous material.

- **Review** the activities and handouts thoroughly to ensure appropriateness for training participants. Activities are written for staff who regularly interact with families. However, some activities may not suit the individual training needs of all staff members.

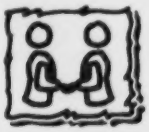
- **Use** the time frames identified for each activity in the **At A Glance** section only as a guide. Time will vary depending on the group size and experience level, the needs of the group, the skill of the trainer/coach, and the flow of discussion.

- **Establish** and **make sure** staff understand the ground rules for maintaining group and family confidentiality.

- **Use** the videotape *A Design for Family Support* as a supplement to the activities where indicated. For more direction, read the instructions at the beginning of each module.

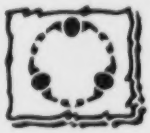
Definition of Icons

Coaching



A training strategy that fosters the development of skills through tailored instruction, demonstrations, practice, and feedback. The activities are written for a coach working closely with one to three participants.

Workshop



A facilitated group training strategy that fosters the development of skills through group interaction. These activities are written for up to 25 participants working in small or large groups with one or two trainers.

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Activities assigned by the trainer immediately following the completion of the module to help participants review key information, practice skills, and examine their progress toward expected outcomes of the module.

Continuing Professional Development

Follow-up activities supporting continued staff development in the regular use of the skills addressed in a particular training guide including:

(1) Opportunities tailored to help the participant continue building on the skills learned in the training; and

(2) Strategies to help the participant identify new skills, along with knowledge needed to expand and/or complement these skills, through opportunities in such areas as higher education, credentialing, or community educational programs.

Introduction

At A Glance

Modules	*Activity*	*Time**	*Materials*
Module 1: What Is Family Support?	Activity 1-1: Examining Ways of Working with Families (W)	60 minutes	Handout 1, Newsprint, Markers, Tape, Scissors
	Activity 1-2: Applying the Principles of Family Support (W)	75 minutes	Handouts 2 and 3, Newsprint, Markers, Tape, VCR, Monitor, Videotape
	Activity 1-3: Skill Development in Working with Families (C)	120 minutes *(2 one-hour sessions)*	Handouts 3, 4, and 5, VCR, Monitor, Videotape
	Activity 1-4: Identifying Strategies and Skills to Family Support (W)	120 minutes	Handouts 4, 5, and 6, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
Module 2: Essential Skills for Working with Families	Activity 2-1: Demonstrating Supportive Behaviors (W)	30 minutes	Handout 1, Newsprint, Markers, Tape, Labeled Newsprint
	Activity 2-2: Developing Skills in Partnership Talk (W)	90 minutes	Handout 2, Newsprint, Markers, Tape, VCR, Monitor, Videotape
	Activity 2-3: Practicing Partnership Talk (W)	45 minutes	Handouts 3 and 4, Newsprint, Markers, Tape, Scissors, Name Tags
	Activity 2-4: Joining with a Family (W)	40 minutes	Newsprint, Markers, Tape, VCR, Monitor, Videotape
	Activity 2-5: Strategies for Building Staff-Family Partnerships (C)	180 minutes *(3 one-hour sessions)*	Handouts 1, 2, 5, 6, and 7, Newsprint, Markers, Tape, VCR, Monitor, Videotape
	Activity 2-6: Addressing Challenging Behaviors (W)	60 minutes	Handouts 6 and 7, Newsprint, Markers, Tape

(W) = Workshop
(C) = Coaching

*Time may vary depending on group size and experience level, the needs of the group, the trainer's ability, and the flow of discussion.

Modules	*Activity*	*Time**	*Materials*
Module 3: Mobilizing Family Strengths	Activity 3-1: Defining Family Strengths (W)	30 minutes	Handout 1, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 3-2: Exploring Family Strengths (W)	75 minutes	Handout 2, Newsprint, Markers, Tape, VCR, Monitor, Videotape
	Activity 3-3: Practicing the Skill of Reframing (W)	45 minutes	Handouts 3 and 4, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 3-4: Skill Development in Reframing (C)	60 minutes	Handout 3, Newsprint, Markers, Tape, Paper, Pencil
	Activity 3-5: Identifying Key Players in the Lives of Families (W)	45 minutes	Handout 5, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 3-6: Skill Development in Exploring Family Strengths and Identifying Key Players (C)	60 minutes *(2 thirty-minute sessions)*	Handouts 1, 2, and 5, Newsprint, Markers, Tape

(W) = Workshop
(C) = Coaching

*Time may vary depending on group size and experience level, the needs of the group, the trainer's ability, and the flow of discussion.

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What Is Family Support?

Outcomes

As a result of completing this module, participants will:

- **Identify** philosophies that are supportive of families and apply them in their work;
- **Select** and **use** appropriate family partnership building block strategies; and
- **Assess** their skills in family support.

Key Concepts

The key concepts of Module 1 that serve as a knowledge base for the skills needed for exploring family support include:

- **Family Support.** Family support is a set of relationships and principles that strengthens the developmental journey with families. Family support helps each family construct a solid foundation from which to foster the growth of its members.
- **Family Support Principles.** The family support principles direct or guide our beliefs and instruct us on how to interact with families.
- **Building Blocks to Family Support.** Building blocks are strategies that put the family support principles into practice through the delivery of services to families. The building blocks support the development of staff-family partnerships.

Background Information

All families must fulfill certain responsibilities including education and socialization, economic support, health care and protection, and family maintenance. Head Start agencies, devoted to achieving a community of family support, serve to complement, not assume, these basic responsibilities. However, family support is not necessarily defined by a set of tasks. Rather, it is a set of principles which direct or guide our beliefs and show us how to interact with families.

The Family Support Principles

Staff-family interaction is based on the following principles:

- All families need support.

  Every family regardless of its level of income, education, or self-sufficiency requires support to deal with the challenges posed by today's society. Seeking and using support are critical family strengths, not deficits in family functioning.

- Each family is unique.

  Families are diverse in composition, economic status, cultural/ethnic background, and in the values, beliefs, and practices they follow. Families are supported best when appreciation and respect are shown for family differences.

- The goal of working with families is to strengthen, not substitute for, family responsibilities.

  Families have core responsibilities for their members that society cannot replace, but can support through resources and services. Family responsibilities include economic support, health care and protection, education and socialization, and family maintenance.

- Families benefit most from family-centered support and services.

  Family hopes, interests, strengths, and concerns need to be the primary focus of staff who work with families. The priorities and choices of families are the driving forces in decisions about ways to provide support and services.

- Healthy families do not live in isolation; they are part of larger systems. Healthy families need, use, and foster relationships with extended family members, friends, community groups, social organizations, schools, etc. One of the best ways to support families is to help them develop relationships with others in the various systems that surround them.

Building Blocks to Family Support

Promoting growth and development in Head Start families requires staff to apply the principles of family support in their work by using building block strategies. When implementing these strategies, agencies and staff must continually evaluate their practices. Ongoing evaluation ensures Head Start's effectiveness as a family support resource. The building block strategies include:

- Initiate relationships with families through conversations, not through formal interviews.

  Conversations encourage family support with invitations like: "I want to do a good job, working **with** you. This is a serious responsibility that I want to share with you. I am going to need your help, since you know more about your child than anyone."

- Make the family the senior partner in setting priorities.

  The family, as a system, often views change as threatening. This aspect of change is lessened when families are given the lead role in

determining what they want and need most from others and what they can do for themselves.

- Identify family strengths.

  All families have strengths and skills that are potential resources for achieving their goals. An assessment of family strengths, not family deficits, is the key to creating a supportive community for families.

- Involve all family members, as well as key players, in activities to support the family.

  Staff commitment to the family as a unit, not just the child enrolled in Head Start, is essential. All family members and persons significant to the family must be involved, or the results will be compromised.

- Help the family acquire new skills.

  New skills bring confidence to families in dealing with the demands of life. Providing families with encouragement to pursue their goals and develop new competencies produces realistic hope for the future.

- Encourage the family to expand its network of support.

  Many families do not know how to pursue new avenues of support. Offering families relevant information, inviting them to community events, and linking them with other families are some ways staff can initiate supportive networks.

Instructions

In preparing for conducting this module's activities, use the following guidelines:

- **Preview** the videotape, *A Design for Family Support*. Familiarize yourself with the videotape format and review the activities.

- **Use** the videotape as a supplement to the indicated activities. It is not meant to stand alone.

- **Use** only the first part of the videotape, *Our Families, Our Future*, in Module 1, Activities 1-2 and 1-3.

- **Note** that this videotape was not developed by the Head Start Bureau; it was selected to diversify and broaden the training experience. The segment was field tested by trainers during in-service training sessions.

Activity 1-1: Examining Ways of Working with Families

Purpose: To establish the context for staff-family partnerships through an examination of philosophies that affect how Head Start staff work with families.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 1: *Philosophy Cards, Trainer Materials*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape/Scissors

> **Trainer Preparation Note:** Prepare handout 1, which will be distributed to staff during the first workshop activity by: 1) reproducing the philosophy statements presented in handout 1 (make sure there are five cards for each participant); and 2) cutting the cards on the lines. Two or more copies of individual cards may be used to provide the appropriate number.

1. *Introduce the activity.* Explain that this activity will help staff clarify and compare ways of working with families in the Head Start community.

2. *Examine philosophies.* Randomly distribute five philosophy cards (handout 1) to each participant. While distributing the cards, explain that staff will probably agree with some of the statements, but not with others. Tell staff that they will trade cards until they have a set of at least three that represent their beliefs in working with families. Explain that staff have 15 minutes to complete the task. Ask staff to begin trading cards.

3. (a) *Begin a team activity.* After 15 minutes, call time and instruct staff to spend 10 minutes teaming up with another staff member who has at least three cards with which they agree.

   (b) After 10 minutes, call time and distribute two sheets of newsprint, a marker, and masking tape to each team. Ask the teams to find a place to work and to decide which cards best reflect their views and which cards least represent their views. Tell the teams to record their two sets of statements on the newsprint, listing each set on a separate sheet.

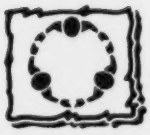
4. (a) *Debrief the activity.* Reconvene the large group. Ask each team to present to the group the statements listed on the newsprint. As pairs make their presentations on the statements, ask them to apply these statements to their work with families by giving some examples.

(b) Encourage debate within the group about the two sets of statements presented by the teams. To encourage comments, ask the group:

- Do you strongly agree or disagree with any of the statements just presented?
- If your family needed help, which statements would offer the most support to you?

5. *Close the activity.* Encourage staff to continue to examine and clarify the ways they work with families through informal discussions with each other and other colleagues.

Activity 1-2: Applying the Principles of Family Support



Purpose: To encourage staff to demonstrate practices and behaviors in their work which reinforce the principles of family support and help the Head Start community move forward as a family support resource.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 2: *Defining Family Support*
- Handout 3: *Family Support Principles*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape
- VCR/Monitor
- Videotape, *A Design for Family Support* (Part 1: Our Families, Our Future[1])

Trainer Preparation Note: Before conducting this workshop activity, please consult the instructions at the beginning of Module 1.

1. *Introduce the activity.* Explain that in this activity, staff will clarify the meaning of family support and examine agency and staff practices that build partnerships with families.

2. *Introduce the videotape.* Tell staff that they are going to watch a 13-minute segment of a one-hour documentary, *Our Families, Our Future,* which shows a Head Start agency in Florida meeting the challenge of family support. Begin part 1 of the videotape, *A Design for Family Support.*

[1]Adapted with permission from *Our Families, Our Future*, writ., dir., and prod. Roger Weisberg, 60 min., Public Policy Productions, Inc. and WNET, 1993, videotape.

3. *Facilitate a group discussion.* Stop the videotape at the "pause for discussion" frame and ask for reactions from the group. To encourage discussion, raise the following questions:

   - What kinds of messages do families receive from the Florida Head Start agency?
   - What types of support does the Florida Head Start agency offer families?
   - How is the agency making a difference in the lives of families?

4. *Initiate a small group exercise.* Divide the participants into small groups, each comprised of four to five members. Explain that in this small group exercise, staff will share their views on what family support means to them and how their work with Head Start families compares to the Florida program's work. Distribute handout 2, sheets of newsprint, markers, and tape. Explain that the groups have 20 minutes to discuss and respond to the questions on the handout.

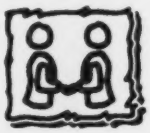
5. *Debrief the exercise.* After 20 minutes call time, reconvene the large group, and ask for a volunteer to report on his/her group's responses to the questions on the handout. Repeat the process with volunteers from the other small groups.

6. *Examine family support.* Distribute and review handout 3; discuss family support and the family support principles. Draw from the module's key concepts and background information. Using handouts 2 and 3, instruct group members to discuss their thoughts on family support. Begin the discussion by asking the following:

   - Are your beliefs regarding family support different/similar to the family support principles?
   - How would adopting the family support principles serve to assist your agency in supporting families?

7. *Close the activity.* Reinforce that the family support principles guide Head Start's work with families. Emphasize that by understanding these principles, staff can begin to develop the skills for building effective partnerships with families.

Activity 1-3: Skill Development in Working with Families



Purpose: To provide opportunities for staff to assess their family support skills and to develop a plan for professional growth.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 3: *Family Support Principles*
- Handout 4: *Building Blocks to Family Support*
- Handout 5: *Family Support Practices and Skills*
- VCR/Monitor
- Videotape, *A Design for Family Support* (Part 1: *Our Families, Our Future*[2])

Coach Preparation Note: Before conducting this coaching activity, please consult the instructions at the beginning of Module 1.

Session 1

1. *Introduce the activity.* Discuss with participants the purpose of this two-session activity and how you will work together to complete its steps.

2. *Conduct a warm-up discussion.* Discuss the ways staff view families by raising questions such as these:

   - To what extent do you think parents should be involved in Head Start plans concerning their children?
   - When a Head Start family doesn't keep an appointment with you, or doesn't follow through with a plan, what do you do?
   - What do you think are some of the best ways to establish partnerships with Head Start families?
   - How do you handle situations where your priorities for a child are different than the family's priorities?
   - What role do you consider most important in your work with families?
   - What kinds of barriers have you experienced in your work with families?

[2]Adapted with permission from *Our Families, Our Future*, writ., dir., and prod. Roger Weisberg, 60 min., Public Policy Productions, Inc. and WNET, 1993, videotape.

3. *Introduce the videotape.* Explain that you are going to show a 13-minute segment of a one-hour documentary, *Our Families, Our Future,* which depicts a Florida Head Start agency practicing family support. Ask staff to think about the ways the agency is similar to or different from their Head Start agency as they watch. Show part 1 of the videotape.

4. *Process the videotape.* Stop the videotape at the "pause for discussion" frame. Distribute handout 3 and review the family support principles. Discuss the ways that the Florida Head Start agency exemplifies the principles of family support.

5. (a) *Explore staff experiences in family support.* Ask staff to present specific examples of their work with families which reinforce the principles of family support. As each example is presented, focus on:

   - The strategies that staff used to support families;
   - Staff perceptions of the family's response to the strategies; and
   - Additional strategies staff might try with the family.

   (b) Distribute handout 4 and discuss the building blocks to family support by drawing on the module's background information. Tell staff that to effectively support families, they can use these strategies.

6. *Present a tool for staff assessment of family support practices and skills.* Distribute handout 5. Explain that by completing the handout, staff will draw some conclusions about their professional strengths in working with families, as well as areas that they would like to develop further. Give staff 10 to 15 minutes to complete the handout. Encourage, but do not require, staff to share their thoughts on what they learned about themselves from completing the handout.

7. (a) *Provide instructions for a homework assignment.* Explain that you want staff to do a homework assignment before you meet again. The assignment requires staff to:

   - Identify a Head Start family;
   - Identify three practices from handout 5 that require further development;
   - Design a plan for family support using the identified practices; and
   - Identify any anticipated barriers.

   (b) Establish a date for staff completion of the assignment and your next meeting.

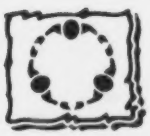
Session 2

1. *Debrief the homework assignment.* Have staff present their plan for family support. Discuss with staff some solutions to the barriers they identified.

2. *Implement the plan.* As homework, instruct staff to implement the plan in order to begin building a supportive relationship with the chosen family. Set a time for staff to report back to you on the results of the strategies they implemented.

3. *Close the activity.* After staff have implemented their plan, discuss the results and ways that staff plan to continue to pursue a partnership with the family.

Activity 1-4: Identifying Strategies and Skills to Family Support



Purpose: To conduct an initial assessment of staff practices and skills that contribute to family support.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 4: *Building Blocks to Family Support*
- Handout 5: *Family Support Practices and Skills*
- Handout 6: *Family Scenario: The Hardy Family*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. *Introduce the activity.* Distribute handout 4 and provide an overview of the building blocks to family support. Use the background information and key concepts in this module to present the overview, stopping after each building block to encourage group discussion. The following discussion questions are suggested:

   - What opportunities do you have to carry out this building block in your job?

   - In what ways have you used this building block in your work with families? What was the result?

   - In thinking about your work experiences with families, does this building block raise any issues for you?

2. *Initiate a small group exercise.* Distribute handout 6. Divide staff into small groups of four to five members. Have each group appoint a facilitator/reporter. Instruct staff to read the scenario and answer all discussion questions. Encourage the groups to be creative as they

brainstorm how to implement the building blocks, that is, not to place any restrictions on their responses because of lack of time, resources, and so on. Distribute sheets of newsprint, markers, and tape to each group.

3. *Reconvene the large group.* Have the small groups report on their responses to the first question on handout 6. After reports on the first question are completed, encourage staff to comment on or add to the responses proposed by the small groups. Push staff to move beyond their current ways of doing business by evoking a spirit of fun in identifying strategies. Repeat the process for each question on the handout.

4. *Provide staff with a tool for self-assessment.* Distribute handout 5. Stress that skill development in family support requires ongoing assessment. Explain that the handout is a tool staff can use to take a look at the ways they work with Head Start families, as well as the ways they would like to develop professionally. Ask staff to work independently and complete the self-assessment handout.

5. *Debrief the self-assessment.* Ask staff to comment on what they learned from the self-assessment exercise. If necessary, raise the following questions:

   - In looking over your assessment, what area (i.e., Family Development, Family Diversity, etc.) best reflects your strengths? What are some of the ways you show these strengths?

   - What area seems most critical for you to work on? What are some ways you might be able to develop your skills in that area?

6. *Close the activity.* Stress that when staff understand the principles of family support and use building block strategies, they create a community of family support. State that ongoing self-assessment ensures their effectiveness in this effort.

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Follow-up training strategies to reinforce the concepts and skills taught in Module 1 are presented below. After completing Module 1, review the strategies with staff and help them choose at least one to work on individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

- **Making Back Home Plans**

  Provide staff with handout 7, which they can use to write down ideas and plans for professional development. Suggest that staff who have the same or similar job responsibilities form a peer support group to discuss family support strategies and ways to achieve professional goals. As an option to forming a peer support group, suggest staff talk with colleagues about what they learned from the training, ideas they would like to try out, and professional skills they would like to develop.

- **Visiting a Model Family Support Program**

  Provide staff with handout 3, along with a description of programs in the community or nearby that are known to follow the principles of family support. Make arrangements for staff to spend a day at the program they are most interested in visiting, or one that is most applicable to their job. In setting up the arrangements, make sure staff will have the opportunity to watch the program in action, by sitting in on a team meeting, observing conversations or interviews with families, accompanying program staff on home visits, and so on. Give staff handout 8 to use for site visit notes. Explain that after the site visit, you will meet with participants to discuss what they learned about family support. Make sure staff know the rules of keeping information about observed families confidential. Establish a time for the follow-up discussion.

- **Building Blocks to Family Support**

  Ask staff to select one of the building block strategies, depicted on handout 4, they would like to try out or improve on in their work with families. After staff select a strategy, assist them in developing a plan to carry it out or learn more about it. For example, they may want to tape record a conversation with a family (with the family's permission) for the purpose of analyzing it later with you. Or, they may want to observe a staff-family visit, conducted by a highly skilled family support worker, to learn more about techniques for drawing out family strengths. Set up a time to follow up with staff on the outcomes of their plans. Repeat the process, with staff selecting another building block strategy.

Handout 1: Philosophy Cards, Trainer Materials[3]

Instructions

Reproduce the philosophy statements listed below. Make sure there are five cards for each participant. Cut the cards on the lines. Two or more copies of the cards may be used to provide the appropriate number.

✂

It is important that all plans to support a family be developed with family members.	Head Start parents should be involved, to the maximum extent possible, in all plans for their children.
Parents who abuse or neglect their children should be punished.	Many Head Start families have serious problems that prohibit them from giving proper care to their children.
The best strategy for working with families is to give lots of advice.	Head Start staff should do everything possible to stop families from becoming dependent upon community resources for assistance.
Children should remain in their own homes, at any cost.	Parents need someone to tell them what to do and how to manage their lives.
Head Start staff should keep demands on the family to a minimum early in the relationship.	When Head Start families fail to keep appointments, it is important for staff to reach out to them and show concern.

[3]Adapted from the Department of Health and Human Services, "Child Welfare In-Service Curriculum," *Serving Families* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Health and Human Services, 1982).

Handout 1: Philosophy Cards, Trainer Materials (continued)

It is important, early in the relationship, for Head Start staff to agree with everything parents say.	To encourage meaningful relationships with family members, Head Start staff should give lots of compliments.
Head Start staff should be open-minded, ready to hear and really understand the family's point of view.	Head Start staff should reach out to troubled families, even when they are not asking for help and even when they resist efforts of help.
When families fail to keep appointments, Head Start staff should see this behavior as a lack of interest in their children.	Even the most troubled families can make positive changes.
It is best to be frank and completely "above board" in talking with families.	Head Start staff should give more attention to the needs of the parents than to those of the children.
The best practice is to focus on what the family wants, not on what Head Start staff want for the family.	The best way to build a relationship with a Head Start family is for staff to provide practical and concrete help.
It is always best to conduct interviews with families in the Head Start center.	Staff should make every effort to involve parents in Head Start, even if this means working "after hours."

Handout 1: Philosophy Cards, Trainer Materials (continued)

✂

The family should take as much responsibility as possible for children in need of special services.	When a family is hostile toward Head Start staff, the best approach is to threaten the family with the child's removal from the program.
Unless Head Start staff are prepared to go all out and stick with a family, they should not initiate a partnership.	Head Start's primary role in working with families is service coordination.
Reaching out to families in trouble requires strong faith in human nature.	Head Start staff must be prepared to ride out some rough beginnings with troubled families.
Providing concrete services to families has more meaning than attempting to deal with feelings and attitudes.	Once Head Start staff become involved with a family, they have to be consistent and persistent.
Head Start staff build trust in a distrustful family by first dealing with specific and urgent needs.	It is best for Head Start staff not to accept a small gift from a family.
It is always best for Head Start staff to see all family members during home visits.	In most conversations with parents it is best to concentrate exclusively on the children.

Handout 1: Philosophy Cards, Trainer Materials (continued)

When parents are in trouble over the care of their children, it is best for Head Start staff to focus on the children and not on the parents' day-to-day problems.	A business letter is threatening to many parents; a better approach is a brief handwritten note.
Each family success, no matter how small, should be recognized and reinforced by Head Start staff.	Active service coordination is essential to effective work with troubled families.
Head Start's job is to build bridges between the family and community resources.	Head Start staff need to know a family's history in order to work effectively with the family.
Head Start staff should encourage parents and children to set goals for themselves.	If a Head Start child says she will tell you something if you promise not to tell anyone else, you should agree to keep the secret between the two of you.
Children grow best when they have decisions made for them, and are told what to do, how to do it, and what to expect.	Children grow best when they are allowed to make all of their own decisions, without guidance from adults.
It is important for the Head Start program's schedule to be followed faithfully.	Three important staff practices are consistent enforcement of the rules; immediate redirection for misbehavior; and identical treatment of all children.

Handout 1: Philosophy Cards, Trainer Materials (continued)

Children grow best when they are allowed to make as many decisions for themselves as possible, with guidance from adults.	Two of the most important practices of Head Start staff are helping families to develop their potential and encouraging families to be active in the community.
When it is clear that a Head Start child's parents have let him down, staff should tell him that parents are sometimes wrong.	Head Start families with children in need of special services should not be present when decisions are being made about those services.
To build partnerships with families, Head Start staff should make frequent home visits.	Most parents known to Head Start are in need of counseling.
When Head Start team meetings are held about a family, all family members should be present and encouraged to participate.	When a number of agencies are involved with a family, it's a good idea to meet and work together.
Head Start team meetings with families are too time consuming to be practical.	Families who do not respond to other approaches require assertive staff outreach.
One way to engage Head Start parents in conversation is to invite them out to coffee.	In working closely with some Head Start families, staff must be able to cope with frustration, rejection, and sometimes hostility.

Handout 1: Philosophy Cards, Trainer Materials (continued)

To let Head Start parents know you understand their problems, it is good to share your own problems with them.	Head Start staff must know and use the most effective techniques available in working with families.
Some parents are incapable of nurturing children.	Family members may be left feeling low, inferior, or helpless, if their needs are not recognized or understood.
Head Start staff must make sure that parents understand their rights and responsibilities, the choices they face, and the possible consequences of their actions.	The services offered and provided by Head Start should be consistent with the families beliefs, values, and expressed wishes and needs.
Head Start staff should strive to accept and respect all families.	Work with families, that is not insight-oriented, fails to bring about permanent or significant changes.
Head Start staff must be aware of personal biases that could interfere with building family partnerships.	It is the job of Head Start staff to explore all possible resources needed by the family, even those that are not readily accessible.
Programs designed to support families must work to change social and economic forces that drain family hopes.	Head Start staff often fail to identify and make use of the family's own strengths and resources.

Handout 1: Philosophy Cards, Trainer Materials (continued)

Head Start's role with parents is far different from the traditional role of social service agencies.	The primary goal of working with Head Start families is to help them become self-sufficient.
The partnerships Head Start staff establish with family members can be the major means of bringing about growth and change in the family.	Parent characteristics shape the staff-family relationship more than staff knowledge, skill, and style.
Head Start's primary job is to help families identify and establish their own support systems.	Most Head Start families will form partnerships with staff, if staff recognize family strengths.
It is the job of Head Start staff to take the lead role in obtaining all services families need.	The best way to learn about a family is to use an interview guide.

Handout 2: Defining Family Support

Instructions

Appoint a group facilitator/reporter. Your group has 20 minutes to discuss the questions listed below. Make sure that all group members have the opportunity to share their responses to the questions. Record the group's answers on newsprint.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think of when you hear the phrase "family support"?

2. In what way is family support an important part of your work with families? What kinds of opportunities do you have in your job to support families?

3. In light of what you saw on the videotape, how does your work with families compare to the work of staff in the Florida Head Start agency? Did you see staff in the Florida agency doing anything that you would also like to do in your job? Or, that you would like to see your Head Start agency do?

4. In thinking about the families in your Head Start community, and the challenges they face, do you believe your Head Start agency does a good job of supporting families? If yes, in what ways? If not, what can your agency do to help Head Start become more supportive of families?

5. If you were given the job of designing a model family support program, what would the program be like?

Handout 3: Family Support Principles

Overview

Family support is a set of relationships and principles that strengthens the developmental journey with families. Family support helps each family construct a solid foundation from which to foster the growth of its members. The Family Support Principles direct or guide our beliefs and instruct us on how to interact with families. Staff-family interaction is based on the following principles:

- **All Families Need Support.** Every family regardless of its level of income, education, or self-sufficiency requires support to deal with the profound challenges posed by today's society. Seeking and using support are critical family strengths, not deficits in family functioning.

- **Each Family Is Unique.** Families are diverse in composition, economic status, and cultural/ethnic background, and in the values, beliefs, and practices they follow. Families are supported best when appreciation and respect are shown for family differences.

- **The Goal of Working with Families Is to Strengthen, Not Substitute for, Family Responsibilities.** Families have core responsibilities for their members that society cannot replace, but can support through resources and services. Family responsibilities include economic support, health care and protection, education and socialization, and family maintenance.

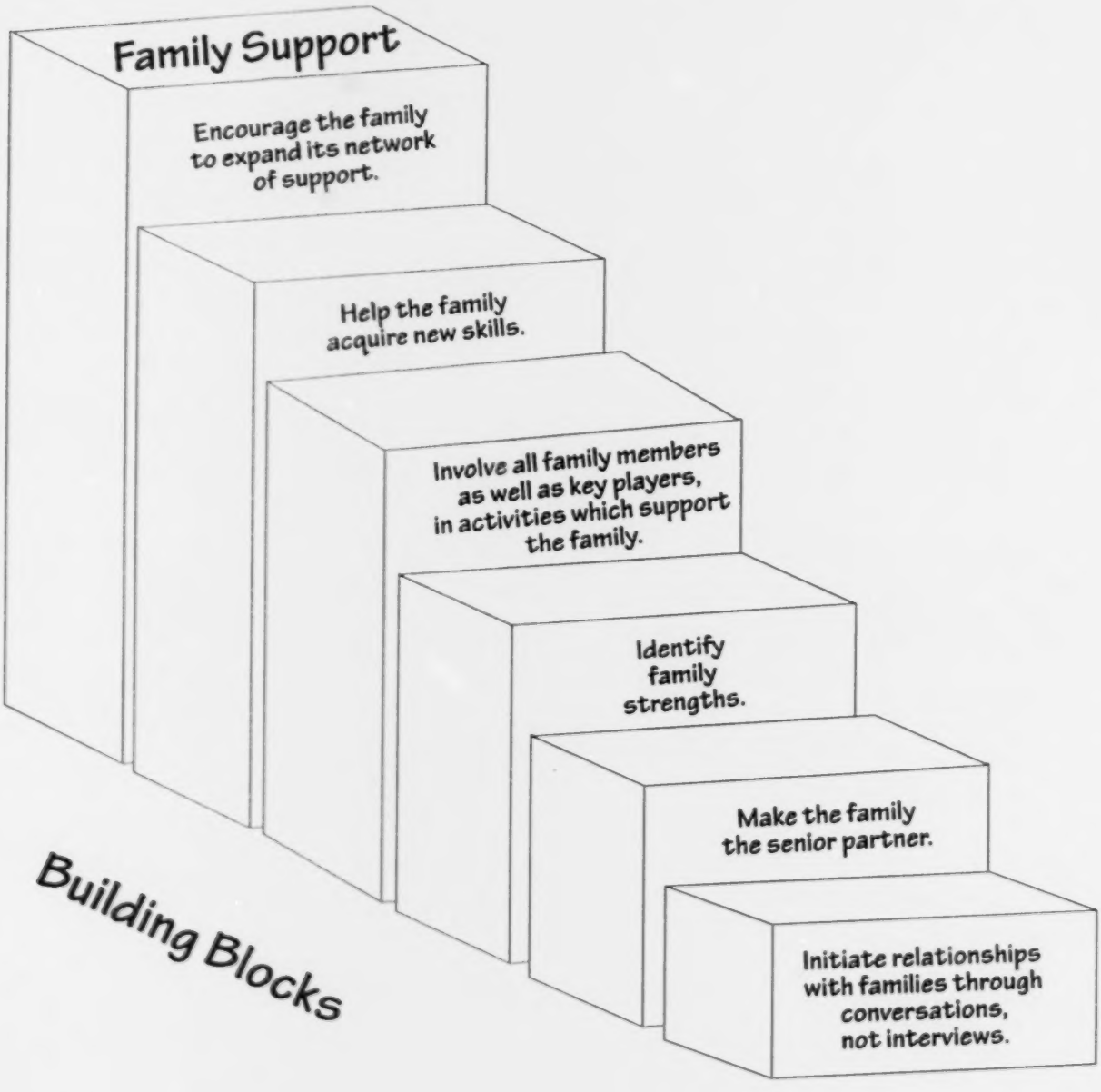
- **Families Benefit Most from Family-Centered Support Services.** Family hopes, interests, strengths, and concerns need to be the primary focus of staff who work with families. The priorities and choices of families are the driving forces in decisions about ways to provide support and services.

- **Healthy Families Do Not Live in Isolation; They Are Part of Larger Systems.** Healthy families need, use, and foster relationships with extended family, friends, community groups, social organizations, schools, etc. One of the best ways to support families is to help them develop relationships with others in the various systems that surround them.

Handout 4: Building Blocks to Family Support

Overview

Promoting growth and development in Head Start families requires staff to apply the principles of family support in their work by using building block strategies. When implementing the building blocks, agencies and staff must continually evaluate their practices. Ongoing evaluation ensures Head Start's effectiveness as a family support resource. The building block strategies to family support include:


Family Support
Encourage the family to expand its network of support.
Help the family acquire new skills.
Involve all family members as well as key players, in activities which support the family.
Identify family strengths.
Make the family the senior partner.
Initiate relationships with families through conversations, not interviews.
Building Blocks

Handout 5: Family Support Practices and Skills[4]

Instructions

The questions listed below are to help you assess your professional practices in working with Head Start families. Think about the practices raised in the questions and put a plus sign (+) next to those you use all or most of the time. Put a check sign (✓) next to those practices you sometimes use. Put a minus sign (-) next to those practices you never or rarely use. If the question is not applicable to your job, put N/A. You will not have to show your responses to the questions to anyone. When you are finished, go over the questions again; this time, write down what you do, or could do, to build family partnerships.

Family Development

____ Do you involve the whole Head Start family, not just the child's parent(s), in the services you offer?

____ Do you contribute to on going assessment of Head Start family goals, strengths, interests, and concerns?

____ Do you extend invitations to Head Start families to work in partnership with you?

____ Do you use conversations with Head Start families, rather than formal interviews, to build family partnerships?

____ Are you able to identify strengths within all Head Start families?

____ Do you take the time to listen to Head Start families talk about their hopes or goals for the future?

____ Do you help Head Start families get together for mutual support?

Family Diversity

____ Do you use the Head Start family's first language, or take other steps to make sure that you and the family members understand each other?

____ Do you ask Head Start families whom they consider family?

____ Are you able to build partnerships with Head Start families very different from your own?

____ Do you encourage Head Start families to teach you about their family traditions, customs, values, beliefs, and practices?

____ Do you encourage children and families to learn about different kinds of families?

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[4]Adapted with permission from Gigi L. Stafne with Donald Gjesfjeld, *The Family Based Services Support Program Self-Assessment Checklist* (Eau Claire, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Division of Community Services, 1989).

Handout 5: Family Support Practices and Skills (continued)

Support for Families

____ Do you help Head Start families develop networks of informal support?

____ Do you help Head Start families gain access to community resources?

____ Are you able to help families achieve a sense of belonging to the Head Start community?

____ Do you make yourself available to Head Start families as a source of support during difficult or stressful family times?

____ Do you reach out to Head Start families by engaging them in casual conversations, arranging convenient times for talking with them, and making home visits?

Teamwork

____ Do you apply a team approach to your work with Head Start families?

____ Do you work with Head Start families as a group to develop or improve family resources?

____ Do you keep other Head Start staff informed about family events or situations that might affect their work with families?

____ Do you reach out to key individuals in the community to gain their support and involvement in developing resources for Head Start families?

Handout 6: Family Scenario: The Hardy Family

Instructions

Appoint a group facilitator/reporter. Read the vignettes, designed to put you in the shoes of each Hardy family member, and discuss the questions raised at the end of the handout.

The Hardy Family:

Tina Hardy, age 18, Head Start parent
Lester Hardy, age 40, Tina's father
Eva Hardy, age 30, Tina's stepmother
Alex Hardy, age 12, Tina's brother
Charles Hardy, age 3, Tina's son
Sam Wise, age 21, Charles' father

Tina Hardy

You have just turned 18 and have a three-year-old son named Charles, recently enrolled in Head Start. You and Charles live with your father, your stepmother, and your brother in a small home on the outskirts of town. You stay in touch with Sam, Charles' father, but are dating other men. You are a high school senior and will graduate in six months, if you keep your grades up. You want to be a veterinary technician after you finish high school, but also would like to marry, have your own home, and settle down as a housewife. Your best friend is your Aunt Flo, who listens to your problems. You would like to feel closer to your mom, who lives in another state and rarely talks to you because she's still "mad" about your decision to keep Charles. Your relationship with your stepmother is filled with arguments about the best way to raise your son.

You want to provide a good and stable home for Charles, but don't know how you are going to be able to do that without a job, a husband, or more education. You're glad that Charles is in Head Start, but you have no interest in getting involved in parent activities.

Lester Hardy

You are Tina's and Alex's father and Charles' grandfather. You remarried a year ago and find your new wife's constant complaints about Tina and Charles very upsetting. You're starting to think that the only way to a happy marriage is for Tina and Charles to move out of the house. However, you are close to your grandson and want him to live with you. You find yourself caught in a terrible bind and don't know what to do. You find yourself staying at work, even when you don't have to be there, to escape the problems at home.

Handout 6: Family Scenario: The Hardy Family (continued)

Eva Hardy

You are Tina's stepmother and Lester's new wife. You have a demanding night job as a police dispatcher and resent having to take care of Charles in the afternoons when Tina is in school. On top of that, Tina often stays out all night on weekends and you're left with Charles again. Although you think Tina wants to be a good mother, she leaves most of the daily chores of child-rearing up to you. If Lester doesn't make Tina move out with Charles soon, you're going to leave.

Alex Hardy

You are Tina's only brother, in the 7th grade at school, and find life at home to be one of constant arguments between your dad and stepmother. Plus, Charles always follows you around the house, wanting you to do things with him. You've given Charles some hard punches to let him know you want to be left alone. Staying away from home is your only escape, but you're experiencing a lot of pressure when you're away to do drugs with your friends. You miss your mother every day and don't understand why she left you.

Charles Hardy

You are Tina's three-year-old son, go to Head Start in the morning, and spend the afternoons alone watching TV. Other than your mom, the most important person in your life is your grandpa. You wish your grandpa didn't have to work all the time and could play more often with you. Alex, your uncle, is always telling you to "bug off" and your Grandma Eva yells at you a lot. Your dad stopped visiting you, after he and your grandpa had a big fight. All in all, you find yourself sad and lonely, except when you're at Head Start.

Sam Wise

You are Charles' father, live in the same town, and recently lost your job in construction. You are still in love with Tina, even though you know she's dating other men. You think if you could get a good-paying job and stop drinking, Tina might be willing to marry you. You would like to be able to spend more time with your son. However, the last argument between you and Lester Hardy about not paying child support for Charles ended in disaster, with Lester saying you couldn't see Charles again. You know that Charles is going to Head Start, but you know nothing about the program.

Handout 6: Family Scenario: The Hardy Family (continued)

Discussion Questions

As a group, brainstorm ideas for carrying out the building block strategies proposed in each question. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. In calling out your ideas, do not feel limited to the way you work with families now or the availability of current resources. You have 40 minutes to complete your task.

✎ One family support building block is to *initiate relationships with families through conversations, not interviews.* In supporting the Hardy family, how would you initiate the conversation?

✎ A second building block is to *make the family the senior partner in setting priorities.* What would you say or do to encourage Charles' family to take the lead role in setting priorities?

✎ Another building block is to *help families recognize and build on their strengths.* What strengths do you see in the Hardy family? How would you help the family build on its strengths?

✎ A fourth building block is to *involve all family members, as well as key players, in activities to support the family.* How would you encourage such involvement in the Hardy family?

✎ *Helping the family acquire new competencies or skills* is yet another building block to family support. How would you encourage members of the Hardy family to acquire new skills for dealing with the demands of life? For achieving their hopes for the future?

✎ One of the most important family support building blocks is to *encourage families to expand their networks of support.* What are some potential sources of support for the Hardy family? How would you help the family make connections to those sources of support?

Handout 7: Back Home Plans[5]

Instructions

Think about the various family support strategies explored and discussed during the training. Using your notes and handouts to help you recall key ideas, jot down the strategies that really made an impression on you in the three sections below. When you are finished, go on to the next page.

Section 1: Strategies I use now, but want to improve.

Section 2: Strategies I was aware of, but have never tried.

Section 3: Strategies totally new to me.

[5]Adapted with permission from Barbara Wolfe and Larry Edelman, *A Handful of Training Activities: Survey of Adaptable Training Activities* (Eau Claire, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin).

Handout 7: Back Home Plans (continued)

Instructions

Look over the strategies you listed on the previous page. Select two or three that you want most to improve on or try out in your work with families. Then, record the strategies below, set target dates for improving or trying out the strategies, map out the steps you will take, and list the resources you might need along the way.

Strategy #1: _____

I want to improve on or try out this strategy by this date: _____

Steps I will take:	Resources to help me achieve this step:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Strategy #2: _____

I want to improve on or try out this strategy by this date: _____

Steps I will take:	Resources to help me achieve this step:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Strategy #3: _____

I want to improve on or try out this strategy by this date: _____

Steps I will take:	Resources to help me achieve this step:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Handout 8: Reflections of a Family Support Program

Instructions

Use this handout to write down your reactions to the site visit. Share your experience with your coach or trainer.

✎ What are the most striking characteristics of the program you visited?

✎ In what ways is the program's work with families similar to Head Start? Different from Head Start?

✎ What impressed you most about the way program staff spoke about or talked with families?

✎ What are some ways program staff support families or build staff-family partnerships?

✎ Did the visit give you any ideas about what you might do differently in your work with families? What Head Start might do differently?

✎ In what ways might Head Start and the program visited work together to improve resources for low income families?

Essential Skills for Working with Families

Outcomes

As a result of completing this module, participants will:

- **Build** effective partnerships with Head Start families;
- **Use** partnership strategies to reinforce Head Start's supportive approach toward families; and
- **Select** and **use** appropriate strategies for addressing challenging behaviors.

Key Concepts

The key concepts of Module 2 that serve as a knowledge base for developing skills needed for working with families include:

- **Staff-Family Partnerships.** Partnerships involve Head Start staff and family members working together to support the family's growth and development. Partnerships are most effective when staff respect the family's rights and adopt positive staff behaviors.
- **Strategies to Reinforce Partnerships.** Partnerships with families do not just happen; they must be built using the strategies of partnership talk and joining. Through partnership talk and joining, staff implement the building blocks to family support.

Background Information

Head Start has always considered itself as a "two generation" program. While Head Start was established to help low income children move to the next stage in their development, it has also focused on the development of families. This two generation philosophy is achieved through staff-family partnerships.

Staff-Family Partnerships

Staff-family partnerships are formed to support the family in identifying strengths, addressing concerns, dealing with challenges, and achieving goals. The family and staff are partners, not client and expert. In working as partners, staff turn to the family as the senior partner, respecting and supporting the family's decisions. Staff, therefore, are not forced to be responsible for solving a family's problems.

Building partnerships with families requires staff to recognize and respect the family's right to:

- **Be unique** and treated not just as a family, but as a particular family with its individual qualities and differences;

- **Express** opinions and emotions freely, including feelings of anger, resentment, fear, and sadness, and receive sensitive, purposeful, and appropriate responses from staff;

- **Have** relationships with staff that are free of criticism, yet encourage a change in behaviors destructive to the family;

- **Make** its own choices and decisions within the framework of the law;

- **Have** information about the family kept confidential and private; and

- **Ensure** they are the senior partner.

While staff cannot force a partnership with a family, they can increase the chances that a partnership will develop through their own behaviors. Studies show that positive staff behavior usually results in a positive relationship with the family. Negative behavior, on the other hand, may result in difficult staff-family relationships.[1] A picture of the ideal worker, as described by families, is one who shows:

- **Empathy**: the ability to perceive and communicate accurately and with sensitivity to the feelings and experiences of another person;

- **Genuineness**: the ability to be spontaneous and come across as a real person;

- **Acceptance**: the ability to communicate warmth, respect, liking, and concern in gentle ways;

- **Concreteness**: the ability to communicate thoughts and ideas clearly and specifically;

- **Competence**: knowing what to do and how to do it; and

- **Objectivity**: the ability to see different points of view.

Influences on the Development of Staff-Family Partnerships.

It is important to recognize that family characteristics; staff skill, knowledge, and experience; and variations in Head Start agencies influence the development of staff-family partnerships.

The first influence is the range of family characteristics. Some families welcome Head Start's supportive approach. They are very receptive to becoming acquainted with staff, tend to seek out staff support, and have a good grasp of their own family strengths and goals. Typically, these families are also very involved in the Head Start community as contributing

[1]Adapted from the Department of Health and Human Services, "Child Welfare In-Service Training Curriculum," *Serving Families* (Washington, D.C., Department of Health and Human Services, 1982).

members; they are both able to give and receive support. However, there are families that lack trust in others and see little hope for the future. They tend to see themselves as having few, if any, strengths, and as having many unsolvable problems. Typically, these families have never experienced supportive relationships in prior involvement with the broader community service system.

The second influence, that has an impact on staff-family partnerships, is staff skill, knowledge, and experience in supporting families. This influence begins with Head Start staff who routinely apply the principles of family support to their work with families. They are able to help most families achieve their goals through staff-family partnerships; in effect, they serve as family support role models in the Head Start community. At the other end of the spectrum are staff who have had little experience working directly with families. The principles of family support, as well as the building blocks, are unfamiliar concepts to them. They tend to follow the more traditional model of working **for** families to solve problems, rather than **with** families to overcome the challenges of life.

The third influence pertains to the variations in the Head Start agencies, themselves, as family support resources. While Head Start has always been a source of support to families, some local programs have taken a more proactive and comprehensive approach than others to supporting families. Some Head Start communities are already recognized as models in the family support arena. Other Head Start communities, however, have not yet achieved their potential as a source of support for **all** families.

Strategies for Forming Staff-Family Partnerships

Some of the fundamental concepts and skills needed for working successfully with families are partnership talk and joining.

- Partnership Talk

  Partnership talk is actively listening to families and helping them tell the stories that they want to tell. Partnership talk occurs as people become partners working together toward the same goal and is a means of showing families they are respected and valued. Staff can encourage partnership talk by having conversations, not interviews; sharing power; adopting an attitude of "not knowing" and "wanting to understand"; asking open-ended questions with lots of pauses; focusing on family strengths and successes; and encouraging different points of view.

- Joining

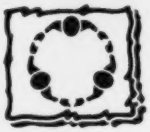
  The primary function of joining is to gain the family's trust and confidence. Joining is defined as taking time to talk with each family member, listening to their concerns, and becoming comfortable with the family's conversation and interactions. When staff join with a family,

they do not impose their own agenda, but instead, take time to learn from the family. This means exploring how the family sees itself, drawing out the family's strengths, and helping the family identify its own concerns and goals. It also means learning about and respecting the family's culture. Staff can encourage joining by using: 1) non-verbal communication with a family including gestures, body positions, facial expressions, physical closeness and distance, eye gaze, and touch; and 2) everyday topics to diffuse the sense of strangeness or implied power which families may experience during the initial meeting.

Instructions

- **Preview** the videotape *A Design for Family Support*. Familiarize yourself with the videotape format and review all activities.
- **Use** the videotape as a supplement to the indicated activities. It is not meant to stand alone.
- **Use** part 2 of the videotape, *Building a Family Partnership: Partnership Talk,* in Module 2, Activities 2-2 and 2-5.
- **Use** part 3 of the videotape, *Building a Family Partnership: Joining*, in Module 2, Activities 2-4 and 2-5.
- **Understand** that the families on this videotape are real families describing their actual situation. However, the families' names have been changed.
- **Note** that this videotape was not developed by the Head Start Bureau. However, the segments were field tested by trainers during in-service training sessions. This videotape was selected to diversify and broaden the training experience and can be used in a variety of training situations.
- **Be** prepared for disagreements. The videotape segments may provoke many different reactions from participants, who might disagree about what actually happened and what issues were raised, and have both very positive and very negative reactions to the same consultant and the same family. Both the positive and negative aspects of the consultants' conversations with families provide opportunity for learning.

Activity 2-1: Demonstrating Supportive Behaviors



Purpose: To encourage self-examination of behaviors that enhance or hinder the development of partnerships.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 1: *What Families Might Say*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape
- Sheets of newsprint labeled: 1) "Empathy," 2) "Genuineness," 3) "Acceptance," 4) "Concreteness," 5) "Competence," and 6) "Objectivity," along with brief definitions of each word.

Trainer Preparation Note: In preparing the sheets of newsprint, refer to handout 1. Label six sheets of newsprint with the terms empathy, genuineness, acceptance, concreteness, competence, and objectivity and write in their definitions. One each sheet make two columns, label the left one "positive" and label the right one "negative." Staff will use the remaining space to complete the activity.

1. *Introduce the activity.* Explain that in this first activity, staff will explore their personal experiences with professional helpers. Ask staff to close their eyes and think about a specific time when they turned to a professional for help or support; perhaps that someone was a family doctor, teacher, counselor, or preacher. Then, ask staff to keep their eyes closed and reflect on each of these questions:

   - What do you remember most about the person?

   - What did the person say or do that made you feel better? Or that made you feel worse?

2. *Identify behaviors that promote partnerships.* Tape the prepared and labeled sheets of newsprint around the room. Distribute markers to all participants. Review the terms and definitions appearing on the labeled sheets of newsprint; i.e., empathy, genuineness, acceptance, concreteness, competence, and objectivity.

3. *Initiate a large group activity.* Instruct staff to go around the room and write down phrases on the sheets of newsprint that capture their personal experiences with professional helpers. In the left columns, instruct staff to note positive experiences with professionals. For example, on the sheet labeled "empathy" staff might write "seemed concerned about me" or "comforted me." In the right columns, instruct staff to note negative experiences with professionals. For example, on the sheet labeled "empathy" staff might write "cold fish" or "didn't seem to care." Tell staff they have 15 minutes to develop the lists.

4. *Process the activity.* After 15 minutes, call time and go over the phrases listed in the two columns on each sheet of newsprint. Encourage staff to call out additions to the lists. Distribute handout 1, providing staff with additional behaviors. Discuss the importance of these behaviors when working with families.

5. *Close the activity.* State that the ideal worker exhibits these six key behaviors. Explain that studies show a link between positive staff behavior and positive relationships with families. Ask staff to spend the remaining two to three minutes of the activity thinking about how they might be described by the families they work with.

Activity 2-2: Developing Skills in Partnership Talk

Purpose: To provide staff with the opportunity to observe and analyze partnership talk strategies.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 2: *Ways to Encourage Partnership Talk*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape
- VCR/Monitor
- Videotape, *A Design for Family Support* (Part 2, *Building A Family Partnership: Partnership Talk*[2])

Trainer Preparation Note: Before conducting this workshop activity, please consult the instructions at the beginning of Module 2.

1. *Introduce the activity.* Review with staff the concept of partnership talk outlined in the background information section of this module.

2. *Introduce the videotape.* Explain that staff are going to watch a videotape that shows consultants using partnership talk strategies with families. State that the videotape illustrates basic communication strategies to build support and trust with a family. Begin part 2 of the videotape.

3. *Recap partnership talk.* Pause the videotape at the "pause for discussion" frame. Distribute and review handout 2, which recaps the partnership talk strategies just presented. Ask staff whether they have any questions or comments before watching the next videotape segment.

[2]Adapted with permission from *Building a Family Partnership*, prod. Jana Staton, ed. Kathy Herr, Heritage Production, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Foundation, 1994, videotape.

4. (a) *Introduce the Dutton family.* Tell staff they are going to see Insoo Kim Berg, a family consultant, in her first conversation with the Dutton family. The family members are:

   Ms. Pam Dutton, a single parent.
   Mrs. Pearl Dutton, Pam's mother.
   Pam's three children — 2 ½-year-old Jabril, 4-year-old Khadijah, and 18-month-old Bahcil.

   (b) Ask staff to watch for the specific ways the family consultant encourages partnership talk. Show the videotape segment on the Dutton family.

5. *Process the videotape.* Stop the videotape at the "pause for discussion" frame. Use the questions below to guide discussion. Examine both positive and negative staff reactions to the videotape. Capture key points on newsprint.

   - What struck you most about the family consultant's conversation with the Dutton family?
   - In what ways did the consultant encourage partnership talk?
   - How did the family consultant welcome and acknowledge each member of the Dutton family? Why do you think the family consultant greets the grandmother first? Would you have made the same introduction?
   - What was the first topic of the consultant's conversation with Pam? Why do you believe she chose that topic? *(The first topic is Pam's desire to live independently again. This is a safe topic which encourages Pam to discuss more freely her other concerns.)*
   - What was the consultant able to learn about the Dutton family in just a few minutes? *(Insoo Kim Berg was able to learn about: family relationships and dynamics; the sharing of child care responsibilities; family priorities and concerns; Jabril's level of development; and the family's use of community resources.)*
   - Do you think the consultant would have learned as much about the Dutton family through a formal interview? How do you think Pam and Pearl would have reacted to an interview guided by a standard set of questions?
   - After the conversation, what words do you think Pam and Pearl would use to describe the consultant?

6. (a) *Provide an overview of the Williams family.* Explain that the upcoming videotape segment shows another family consultant, Harry

Aponte, in conversation with the Williams family. Point out that the segment illustrates the importance of listening to the family's story, rather than of focusing on the children. The family members are:

Ms. Nicole Williams
Mrs. Thomasina Williams, Nicole's mother
Nicole's two children — Dante and Demetrius

(b) Show the videotape segment on the Williams family.

7. *Debrief the videotape.* Stop the videotape at the "pause for discussion" frame. Discuss both positive and negative staff reactions to the videotape. Use the following questions to guide the discussion.

   - What struck you the most about the family consultant's conversation with the Williams family?

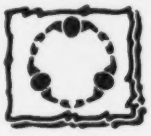
   - In what ways did the consultant encourage partnership talk? *(Make sure that staff notice that Harry Aponte lets Nicole and Thomasina direct the conversation; takes time to understand and acknowledge the family's immediate concerns before asking about Dante's health; uses small cues, such as "all right" or "I see"; pauses, to encourage the family to talk; often repeats or summarizes what Nicole and Thomasina say to show his understanding; and asks for clarification about the family's situation in a non-threatening way.)*

   - What was the consultant able to learn about the Williams family in just a few minutes? *(The consultant was able to learn about the family responsibilities, relationship dynamics, family history, medical history, family supports, and child care.)*

   - After the conversation, what words do you think Nicole and Thomasina would use to describe the consultant?

8. *Close the activity.* End the activity by recapping the partnership talk strategies illustrated in the videotape segments. Ask staff to spend the remaining few minutes discussing the ways that they might encourage partnership talk in their conversations with families.

Activity 2-3: Practicing Partnership Talk



Purpose: To provide the opportunity for staff to practice, experience, and assess partnership talk.

Trainer Preparation Note: This activity builds on skills taught in Module 2, Activities 2-1 and 2-2. For best results, this training activity should be used as an extension of these activities.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 3: *Role Play: The Billing Family*
- Handout 4: *Role Play Observation Guidelines*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape/Scissors
- Role Play Name Tags

Trainer Preparation Note: For each group make name tags for: Ms. Ann Wilken, Mr. William Billing, Mrs. Donna Billing, Jackie Billing, and Amanda Billing. Using handout 3, copy and cut role play scripts for each group.

1. *Introduce the activity.* Recap the concepts of staff-family partnership and partnership talk as outlined in the module's key concepts and background information. Explain that in this activity staff will practice and experience partnership talk through role play.

2. (a) *Initiate a role play activity.* Provide a brief overview of the Billing family, based on the following information:

   - Ms. Ann Wilken, a family worker, who is meeting with the Billing family for the first time;
   - Mr. William Billing, a Head Start parent;
   - Mrs. Donna Billing, Mr. Billing's mother;
   - Jackie Billing, Mr. Billing's four-year-old son; and
   - Amanda Billing, Mr. Billing's teenage daughter.

   (b) Ask staff to form small groups, each having seven to eight members. Instruct each group to appoint a facilitator.

(c) Distribute to each facilitator a set of role play name tags, prepared role play scripts and facilitator's instructions (handout 3), and copies of handout 4. Remind participants not to look at any script other than their own. Instruct facilitators to assign roles and begin the role play.

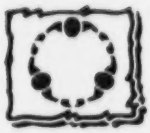
(d) After 15 minutes, instruct facilitators to hold a 15-minute discussion with their small group. Tell observers that they should share their thoughts from handout 4.

3. *Debrief the role play.* After 30 minutes, call time, and reconvene the large group. Use the following questions to encourage discussion:

   - What feelings did you experience in your role as Ms. Wilken? Mr. Billing? Mrs. Billing? Jackie? Amanda?
   - How is partnership talk different from your usual way of talking or interacting with families?
   - Does partnership talk raise any issues for you, in light of your work experiences with families?

4. *Close the activity.* Point out that skill in encouraging partnership talk takes time to develop and past patterns of communication are sometimes hard to change. Suggest that staff practice partnership talk during conversations with each other, their friends, and members of their own family in order to master the skills taught in the activity.

Activity 2-4: Joining with a Family



Purpose: To provide staff with examples of both verbal and non-verbal strategies of joining, and to encourage joining with a family.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Newsprint/Markers/Tape
- VCR/Monitor
- Videotape, *A Design for Family Support* (Part 3, *Building a Family Partnership: Joining*[1])

Trainer Preparation Note: Before conducting this workshop activity, please consult the instructions at the beginning of Module 2.

[1]Adapted with permission from *Building a Family Partnership*, prod. Jana Staton, ed. Kathy Herr, Heritage Production, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Foundation, 1994, videotape.

1. *Introduce the activity.* Ask staff to respond to the question:

   - What does it mean to join with a family?

   As responses are called out, record them on the newsprint. Tell staff that they will take another look at their responses, after they watch the videotape.

2. *Introduce the videotape.* Point out that this portion of the videotape explores the concept of joining. Explain that staff will first see the Bernardo family with family consultant Halcyone Bowen. State that this segment is presented without the spoken conversation to focus attention on non-verbal communication. Next, explain that staff will see the Bond family with family consultant Wayne Jones. This segment focuses on joining by bringing up everyday topics to defuse the sense of strangeness or implied power which families may experience in initial meetings with professionals. Begin part 3 of the videotape.

3. *Discuss the videotape.* Stop the videotape at the "pause for discussion" frame. Use the questions below as a guide.

   - What struck you most about the first consultant's, Halcy Bowen, interaction with the Bernardo family?

   - How did Halcy Bowen, communicate non-verbally? *(Probe for gestures, body positions, facial expressions, eye gaze, touch, and physical closeness and distance.)*

   - What kinds of messages did Halcy Bowen send the Bernardo family through her non-verbal behaviors? How did the family respond?

   - What stuck you most about Wayne Jones' interaction with the second family, the Bond family?

   - What did the second consultant, Wayne Jones, do or say to help the Bond family feel at ease with him? Why do you think he encouraged Mr. and Mrs. Bond to talk about their everyday life?

4. (a) *Explore joining with a family.* Go over the group's initial responses to the question: What does it mean to join with a family? As you go over the list of responses, encourage staff to make comments or revisions based on the information presented in the video.

   (b) Sum up the discussion by stating that joining means gaining the family's trust and confidence by seeing the world through the eyes of the family. Use the module's background information to expand upon the following points:

- When we join with a family, we recognize and respect the family's rights.

- When we join with a family, we turn to the family as the senior partner to help us understand what the family's everyday life is like, what challenges the family faces, and what the family wants to achieve. We are patient, we listen, and we learn.

- Joining with a family does not mean that we agree with everything the family says or does, or that we overlook harmful or illegal family behaviors. Instead, we help families take a close look at the consequences of their words and actions and help them make decisions about what they want to change.

5. *Raise practice issues.* Encourage staff to express any concerns they may have about joining. To stimulate discussion, ask staff to think for a minute about the families they work with, and then ask the question:

   - What issues in your work with families might make joining difficult? (*Probe for issues such as homelessness, child neglect, substance abuse, family violence, criminal activities, etc.*)

   - How would you join the family in dealing with each of these issues?

6. *Close the activity.* As you end the activity, encourage staff to practice the strategy of joining in their work with families. Reinforce that joining is only one strategy for building a staff-family partnership.

Activity 2-5: Strategies for Building Staff-Family Partnerships

Purpose: To encourage staff to use strategies for building staff-family partnerships.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 1: *What Families Might Say*
- Handout 2: *Ways to Encourage Partnership Talk*
- Handout 5: *Exploring Staff Interactions*
- Handout 6: *Challenging Behaviors*
- Handout 7: *Addressing Challenging Behaviors*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape
- VCR/Monitor
- Videotape, *A Design for Family Support*
  (Part 2, *Building a Family Partnership: Partnership Talk*
  Part 3, *Building a Family Partnership: Joining*)[4]

Coach Preparation Note: This coaching activity is divided into three one-hour sessions.

- In the first hour, staff will examine their experiences and learn strategies for building staff-family partnerships.
- In the second hour, staff will observe a conversation with a family and discuss the techniques used to encourage staff-family partnerships.
- In the last hour, staff will practice the strategies of building staff-family partnerships.

Session 1

1. *Lead a warm-up discussion.* Ask staff to talk about their experiences in building staff-family partnerships. Use the following questions as a guide.
   - What are some of your experiences in building partnerships with Head Start families?
   - What do you consider to be your most successful experience in building a staff-family partnership? Your least successful experience?

[4]Adapted with permission from *Building a Family Partnership*. prod. Jana Staton, ed. Kathy Herr, Heritage Production, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Foundation, 1994, videotape.

2. *Explore the essential components of a staff-family partnership.* Review with staff the key concepts and background information on staff-family partnerships. Ask staff to share their views on the following topics:

   - The rights of families; and
   - Staff behaviors that enhance/hinder staff-family partnerships.

3. *Explore desired outcomes for initial visits with families.* Ask staff how they might measure success in initiating a staff-family partnership. List the responses on newsprint. Make sure the following desired outcomes are included on the list:

   - The family is listened to and heard;
   - The family is helped to feel more hopeful about the future;
   - Trust is built with the family;
   - The supportive tone of the partnership is set; and
   - The family is recognized as the senior partner.

4. (a) *Reflect on the strategies of partnership talk and joining.* Begin exploring the ways staff usually interact with families during initial visits by reading the following questions to staff. Ask participants to think about their work with families as the questions are read. Allow several seconds for reflection between questions.

   - Do you rely on a set of interview questions to learn about a family, or do you learn about a family through casual conversation?
   - Who typically does most of the talking — you or the family? Is the family recognized as the senior partner?
   - What topics do you typically focus on — family concerns/problems, or what everyday life is like for the family?
   - Do you give advice, or do you listen? Are you directive, or do you adopt the attitude of not knowing and wanting to understand?
   - How do you join with a family? Do you expect the family to join you in your world, or do you try to see the world from the eyes of the family?
   - What kinds of non-verbal messages do you give families? Do you give a disapproving and judgmental message through your body language and facial expressions, or do you give an accepting and caring message?

- Do you ask open ended questions, allowing the family to comment?
- Do you listen to the family and encourage different points of view with respect and without judgement?
- How do you acknowledge family strengths?

(b) After reading the above points, review the strategies of partnership talk and joining as outlined in the module's key concepts and background information. Distribute handout 2 to provide staff with additional information on partnership talk.

Coach Preparation Note: Before conducting session 2, you should watch parts 2 and 3 of the videotape, *A Design for Family Support;* these will assist you in understanding the concepts of partnership talk and joining. Use the strategies presented in the videotape when staff observe you at a staff-family visit.

Session 2

1. *Prepare staff for observing a staff-family visit.* Explain the plan for giving individual staff an opportunity to observe you (or another highly skilled staff member) having an initial conversation with a family. Distribute handout 5. Instruct staff to use the handout after observing the visit by writing down the strategies of partnership talk and joining they observed.

2. *Observe the staff-family visit.* Conduct the initial visit. If another staff member is selected as the model for staff to observe, join staff in observing the conversation. Plan to spend at least one hour on observation and debriefing.

3. *Debrief the observed staff-family visit.* Encourage staff to be honest about their reactions to the conversation, especially if they observed you. To encourage honest reactions, you may want to begin the debriefing by sharing some of your own reactions. Handout 5 may serve to encourage discussion. Ask staff:

   - What would you have done differently to initiate a partnership with this family?
   - How will you use what you learned in your work with families?

Session 3

1. (a) *Begin a discussion.* Point out that there are different styles of interacting with families. Emphasize that while individual personalities enrich partnerships, sometimes our own personality, the personality of other staff, or the personality of family members can hinder the staff-family partnership. Explain that it is especially important to be aware of how to address challenging behavior so that the partnership can move forward and focus on supporting the family goals. Ask staff:

   - Have you ever encountered challenging behaviors?
   - How can challenging behaviors impede the development of staff-family partnerships?
   - How did you address these behaviors?

   (b) Distribute handout 6 and review the challenging behaviors. Instruct staff to discuss strategies for addressing these behaviors.

   (c) Distribute Handout 7 and review the strategies for addressing challenging behaviors. Encourage staff to add to the list of strategies and to practice the strategies in team meetings.

2. *Develop plans for a staff-family visit.* Ask each individual staff to select a Head Start family that they would like to visit for the first time and make arrangements for visiting this family. Explain that you will accompany each staff member for the purpose of observing the visit and providing feedback on their use of partnership talk and joining strategies, and their ability to address challenging behaviors.

> **Coach Preparation Note:** Be sensitive to the fact that staff and the family may feel threatened by the observation. Emphasize that skill development is an on going process and your intent is to help them develop skills, not to judge them.

3. *Carry out the staff-family visit.* Have staff conduct the staff-family visit. For each staff member you are coaching, allow at least one hour for the visit and debriefing. As the coach, plan to spend a few minutes after the visit summarizing what struck you the most about the way staff related to the family, the way the family responded, and your impressions on the use of partnership talk and joining.

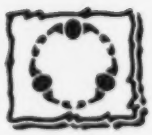
4. *Debrief the staff-family visit.* Begin the debriefing by stressing the positive outcomes of the staff-family visit. Then ask the staff member to share thoughts and feelings about the family visit. Enhance the debriefing by asking for staff views on the following questions:

   - What did you learn about the family during your visit? What else would you like to learn about the family?

- From what you know about the family so far, what kind of partnership role, if any, do you see yourself having with the family?
- Did you encounter any difficulties in building a partnership with the family? If so, how might you overcome them?
- Did anything occur during the visit that made you feel uncomfortable or uncertain about how to continue?
- Did you find any behaviors of family members difficult to address?
- What are your next steps with the family?
- Are there any partnership talk or joining strategies that you would like to learn more about before your next family visit?

5. *Close the activity.* To sum up your coaching experiences with staff, point out the ways the two of you developed a partnership over the course of your work together. Stress what you learned from staff as a result of that partnership.

Activity 2-6: Addressing Challenging Behaviors



Purpose: To examine challenging behaviors and find solutions for addressing them.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 6: *Challenging Behaviors*
- Handout 7: *Addressing Challenging Behaviors*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. *Introduce the activity.* State that there are different styles of interacting with families. Point out that while individual personalities enrich partnerships, sometimes our own behaviors, or the behaviors of family members, can hinder staff-family partnerships. Explain that in this activity, staff will take a look at challenging behaviors and identify some techniques for addressing them.

2. *Initiate a small group activity.* Divide staff into small groups, each with five to six members, and ask each group to appoint a facilitator. Provide each small group with newsprint, markers, and tape. Refer staff to handout 6 and go over the instructions.

3. (a) *Process the small group activity.* After 40 minutes call time, reconvene the large group, and ask for a volunteer to report on his/her group's suggestions for dealing with "Melodramatic Mary." At the

conclusion, ask for comments or additions from other groups. Encourage staff to bring up their own experiences in dealing with a person similar to Mary. Repeat the process for the remaining behaviors.

(b) After processing the activity, refer staff to handout 7, which provides some suggestions for addressing the challenging behaviors, as well as space for recording techniques suggested by the small groups.

4. *Close the activity.* Encourage staff to reflect on their own behaviors. Ask staff to take another look at handout 6 and spend the next minute or two comparing their behaviors to those on the handout. Raise these questions for self reflection:

   - Does any description fit you? Or, do any fit someone you work with?

   - What steps can you take to address these behaviors?

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Follow-up training strategies to reinforce the concepts and skills taught in Module 2 are presented below. After completing Module 2, review the strategies with staff and help them choose at least one to work on individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

- **Making Back Home Plans**

  Provide staff with handout 8, which they can use to record ideas and plans for professional development. Suggest that staff who have the same or similar job responsibilities form a peer support group to discuss partnership talk and joining strategies and ways to apply and improve these strategies in their work. As an option to forming a peer support group, suggest that staff talk with colleagues about what they learned from the training, strategies they would like to try out, and professional skills they would like to develop.

- **Taking Another Look at Partnership Talk and Joining**

  Make arrangements for staff to watch parts 2 and 3 of the videotape *A Design for Family Support* for a second (or first) time. Encourage staff to analyze the segments very carefully by raising these questions for discussion:

  — What struck you the most about the family consultant's way of interacting with the family?

  — How does the family consultant's style of interaction compare to your own?

  — What did the family consultant say or do first? Why do you think the family consultant began in that way?

  — What did the family consultant do to draw in family members? To establish the family as the senior partner? To show support?

  — Would you have done anything differently?

  — What else would be important to learn from this family?

- **Dealing with Staff-Family Partnership Issues**

  Ask staff to select a family for in-depth study. Guide staff through an examination of their successes and challenges in establishing a partnership with the family. Encourage discussion about issues relevant to the family, such as:

  — Balancing the family's right to control its own life with concerns that staff may have about the children in the family;

  — Providing support to the family without creating dependency;

  — Helping a family with multiple challenges set priorities;

  — Making the family the senior partner;

  — Addressing challenging, harmful, or illegal behaviors of family members;

  — Obtaining the family's views on what it wants, needs, or is getting from Head Start; and

  — Expanding opportunities for the family to have fun and experience success.

Handout 1: What Families Might Say[5]

Overview

Studies show that positive staff behavior usually results in a positive relationship with the family. Negative behavior, on the other hand, may result in difficult staff-family relationships. What do families want from professional helpers? The contrasting experiences of families, as cited below, provide some critical clues. The column on the left denotes positive experiences, while the one on the right denotes the negative.

Empathy

The ability to perceive and communicate accurately and with sensitivity to the feelings and experiences of another person.

Positive	Negative
Able to put me at ease, relax me. Concerned about me, interested. Understood me, picked up my vibrations. Gave me time to talk about myself. Was nice to talk with. Was gentle, kind, understanding. Was an avid, intense listener. Made me feel comfortable. Tuned in to my needs, feelings. Communicated easily with me. Comforted me when needed. Cared a lot about me. Had a lot of concern for people.	Was detached, distant. Was a cold fish. Didn't relate to me. Didn't hear what I was saying. Didn't get us to open up. Was off in their own world. Didn't seem to care.

Genuineness

The ability to be spontaneous and come across as a real person.

Positive	Negative
Was warm, lively, alive. Had a good sense of humor. Was casual, relaxed, easy-going, low key. Talked about own family, self, own experiences. Shared own feelings. Didn't seem like a social worker. Seemed like a friend. Seemed like a natural person. Acted like it was more than a job. Was friendly, pleasant, easy to talk with. Was likeable, personable.	Was too nice, phony, put on. Was too low key. Was too calm and collected. Too reserved. Was above it all; almighty, holy. Was mechanical, business-like.

[5]Adapted from the Department of Health and Human Services, "Child Welfare In-Service Training Curriculum," *Serving Families* (Washington, D.C., Department of Health and Human Services, 1982).

Handout 1: What Families Might Say (Continued)

Acceptance

The ability to communicate warmth, respect, liking, and concern in gentle ways.

Positive	Negative
Let me say what I felt. Didn't accuse, criticize, or condemn me. Respected me. Didn't hold anything against me. Didn't treat me like a child. Felt I could trust them, could say anything. Made me feel equal. Made me feel good. Treated me as an individual. Didn't put me down.	Pushed me when I wasn't ready. Seemed superior to me. Made me feel inferior. Lectured me. Didn't like me. Got angry when I didn't follow their ideas.

Concreteness

The ability to communicate thoughts and ideas clearly and specifically.

Positive	Negative
Talked clearly. Could understand them. Made a lot of sense. Was down to earth. Came right to the point.	Was vague. I didn't understand what they were getting at. Didn't come straight to the point. Beat around the bush.

Competence

The ability to know what to do and how to do it.

Positive	Negative
Knew what they were doing. Knew their job. Knew what they were talking about. Obvious that they were very good in their work. Seemed well educated. Seemed experienced. Was a good teacher. Had put it all together. Seemed to know when to ask a question. Always had the situation well in hand.	Didn't know much more than I did. Was too quiet; rarely said anything. It was just like chattering with a friend; too casual. Gave us no guidance. Was too new, inexperienced. Seemed like they were still in training. Was not capable; not professional. Was disorganized. I had no confidence in them.

Objectivity

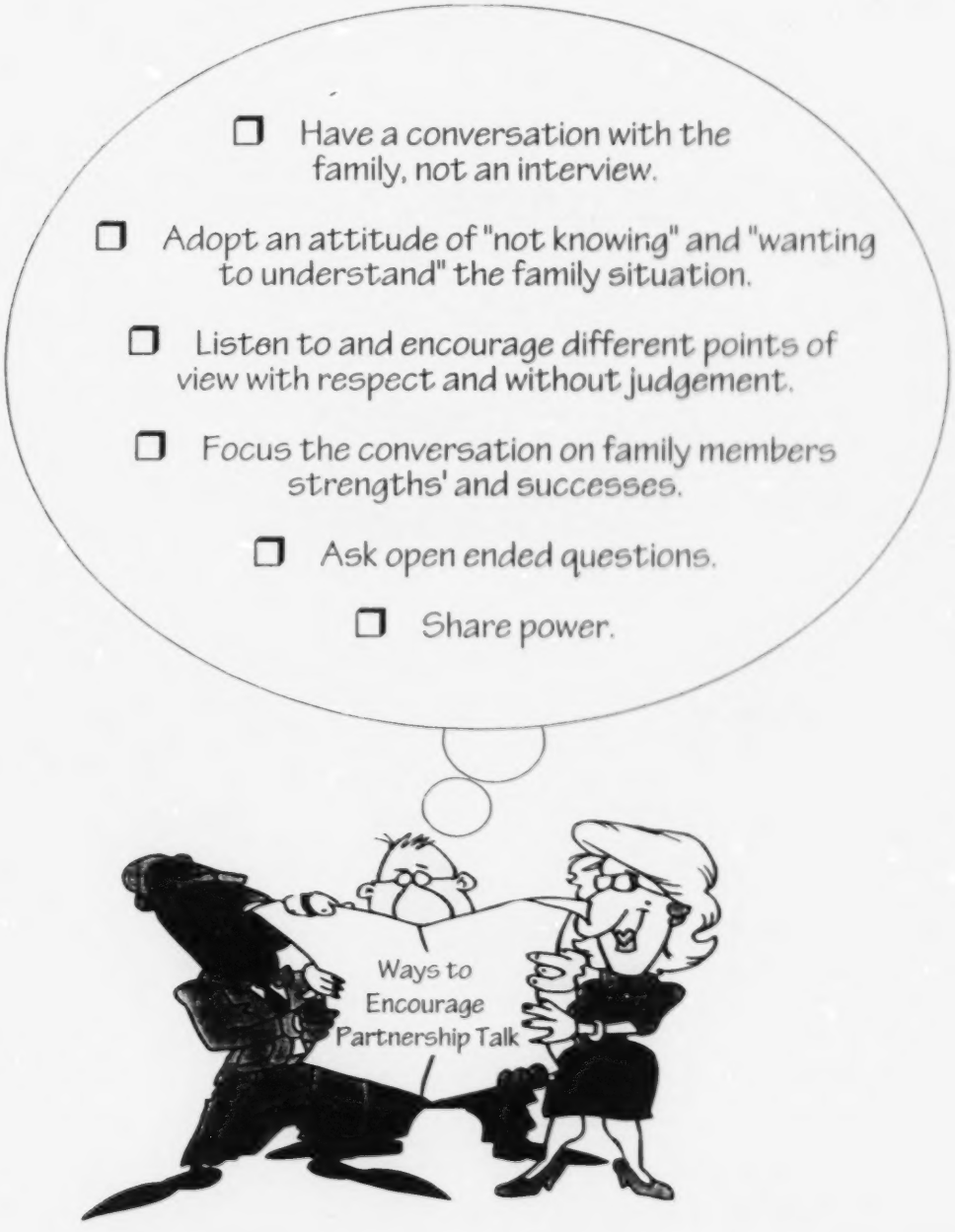
The ability to see different points of view.

Positive	Negative
More objective than a friend. Didn't take sides. Didn't just tell you what you wanted to hear.	Didn't realize I had different ideas. Sided with my spouse. Couldn't see my point of view.

Handout 2: Ways to Encourage Partnership Talk

Overview

Partnership talk is actively listening to families and helping them tell the stories they want to tell. Partnership talk is the kind of talk that occurs as people become partners, working together towards the same goal, and is a means of showing families they are respected and valued. Below are some tips for building family trust, confidence, and rapport through partnership talk.


❒ Have a conversation with the family, not an interview.
❒ Adopt an attitude of "not knowing" and "wanting to understand" the family situation.
❒ Listen to and encourage different points of view with respect and without judgement.
❒ Focus the conversation on family members strengths' and successes.
❒ Ask open ended questions.
❒ Share power.
Ways to Encourage Partnership Talk

Handout 3: Role Play: The Billing Family

Facilitator's Instructions

Ask your group for volunteers to role play: 1) Ms. Ann Wilken, a family worker, who is meeting with the Billing family for the first time; 2) Mr. William Billing, a Head Start parent; 3) Mrs. Donna Billing, Mr. Billing's mother; 4) Jackie Billing, Mr. Billing's four-year-old son; and 5) Amanda Billing, Mr. Billing's teenage daughter. Distribute the role play name tags and scripts. Give the role players two to three minutes to think about their roles. Then, establish the scene in the Billing family's home. Tell the volunteer playing the role of Ms. Wilken to plan to take the lead in initiating conversation with the Billings. Refer remaining group members to handout 4, which provides guidelines for observing the role play. Allow about 15 minutes for the role play and 15 minutes for discussion. During the discussion, make sure all role players and observers have the chance to share their reactions to the role play.

Role Play Scripts

✂ ----------

Ms. Ann Wilken, Family Worker

You are new to Head Start and very excited about being able to help families in your work. Last week you went to a workshop and learned about partnership talk, which you are eager to try out during your home visit with the Billing family today. You have never met the Billing family before, so you're not sure what to expect. However, by the end of today's visit, you want the Billings to see you as a supportive family partner.

✂ ----------

Mr. William Billing, Head Start Parent

Your wife left you and the children eight months ago for another man, which was a devastating family event. You find yourself overwhelmed with the job of being both mother and father to your children. You are barely able to make it through a day without thinking your children would be better off without you, too. You find yourself yelling at your children all the time over things that shouldn't really upset you and never upset you before your wife left. More than anything, you wish you could get yourself together and start having some fun with your children again. You are not looking forward to Ms. Wilken's visit today. You don't feel like talking to anyone, especially a total stranger from Head Start.

✂ ----------

Handout 3: Role Play: The Billing Family (continued)

✂----------

Mrs. Donna Billing, Mr. Billing's Mother

You are very concerned about your son, William, and your two grandchildren, Jackie and Amanda. Your son "just hasn't been right," since his wife left him eight months ago. You tried living with your son for awhile to help him out, but your arthritis flared up, making it impossible for you to do even the simplest household chores. On top of that, you couldn't stand to see your son flying into rages over your grandchildren every day. Now that you're back in your own home, you find yourself going downhill fast from all your worries. You asked to be included in Ms. Wilken's visit today, because you want her to know just how worried you are.

✂----------

Jackie Billing, Mr. Billing's 4-year-old Son

Your mother abandoned you eight months ago. Your dad says she ran away to be with another man, but you think she left because you caused her lots of trouble. You spend most days, even when you're at Head Start, wishing your mother would come back home. You also worry a lot about your dad. He gets mad at you every day, no matter what you do, and you worry about him leaving you, too. Your dad told you Ms. Wilken, a lady from Head Start, is coming to your house today and that you'd better be good.

✂----------

Amanda Billing, Mr. Billing's Teenage Daughter

Ever since your mother left eight months ago to live with another man, you have found life to be unbearable. You can't understand why your mother didn't take you and your brother with her. More than anything, you want to talk to your mother, but you don't know where she is. She hasn't even called to let you know she's thinking about you. Your dad refuses to help; in fact, he says he never wants to hear another word about your mother. When Ms. Wilken visits today, you want to ask her if she'll help you find your mother.

✂----------

Handout 4: Role Play Observation Guidelines

Instructions

During the role play, pay close attention to what each role player says and does. Use the questions below to guide your observations. For each question, take notes on what role players actually say (direct quotes) and do (body language) to support your point of view. At the end of the role play, share your observations with the group.

Questions

- In what ways does Ms. Wilken's visit with the Billing family strike you as a conversation? As an interview?

- Who does most of the talking during the visit?

- In what ways does Ms. Wilken show that she is in tune with family members?

- What kinds of questions does Ms. Wilken ask? How does the Billing family respond?

- What does Ms. Wilken learn about the Billing family during this short visit?

- What kinds of messages does the Billing family receive from Ms. Wilken?

- If you were Ms. Wilken, what would you say or do next to build a partnership with the Billing family?

Handout 5: Exploring Staff Interactions

Instructions

Observe a staff-family visit. After the visit, use the following questions to critique the conversation. Write your observations regarding the strategies of joining and partnership talk.

- Did the staff member rely on a set of interview questions to learn about the family, or did he/she learn about the family through seemingly casual conversation?

- Who typically did most of the talking — the staff member or the family? Was the family recognized as the senior partner?

- What topics did the staff member typically focus on — family concerns/problems, or what everyday life is like for the family?

- Did staff give advice, or did he/she listen? Were they directive, or did he/she adopt the attitude of not knowing and wanting to understand?

- How did the staff member join with the family? Did he/she expect the family to join him/her in their world, or did he/she try to see the world from the eyes of the family?

- What kinds of non-verbal messages did the staff member give?

- Did the staff member ask open ended questions, allowing the family to comment?

- Did the staff member listen to the family and encourage different points of view with respect and without judgment.

- How did the staff member acknowledge family strengths?

Handout 6: Challenging Behaviors[6]

Instructions

Your task is to identify some techniques for addressing challenging behaviors. The behaviors, described below, are not just found in families; they can be found in staff as well. First, go over the behaviors listed, add some examples of behaviors from your own work experiences, and share your reactions to the experiences. Next, brainstorm techniques for handling these behaviors when they surface in a staff-family meeting.

Personality	*Behavior*
Melodramatic Mary	Has a very dramatic style of interaction, all group discussions are very emotional events in her eyes, she sidetracks the discussion by asking questions about team members' feelings rather than by focusing on the purpose of the meeting. She brings focus on herself through this emphasis and ties the group up in talking about whether the process feels good.
Blaming Bob	Is usually a very outgoing person who focuses on problems in the life of the family. He seeks to define the causes, who is to blame, and then points to team members and blames them or the system for the problems. He creates, rather than resolves, conflicts throughout the process.
Minimizing Marsha	Minimizes the needs of the family, displays limited or no emotion or support for family members. As needs are identified, she always questions why they are important. She focuses on the ways the family reacted to the need in the past, rather than on what can be done in the future. She focuses on secondary issues whenever possible.
Silent Sandy	Doesn't participate in meeting discussions. May be silently hostile about what is going on and suggestions made by other team members. This person may actively sabotage team efforts as members move toward solutions.
Negative Nick	Responds to each suggestion by saying it won't work or it has been tried and didn't work. Won't let people who make suggestions finish sentences, and uses unrelated examples in illustrating why things won't work.
Talkative Ted	Dominates meetings by explaining everything in minute detail. Examples used by this individual frequently do not relate to the family or the purpose of the team meeting.
Mandate Mike	Tends to spend most of the meeting talking about rules and responsibilities of community systems set up to support families. Rules and responsibilities are usually discussed to point out pitfalls in the community service system that exclude the family's needs.

[6]Adapted with permission from E. Mary Grealish, *Virginia Wraparound Trainer Manual* (Community Partnership Group, 1994).

Handout 7: Addressing Challenging Behaviors[7]

Instructions

Below are some strategies for addressing challenging behaviors. Use the extra space to record additional strategies discussed during the activity.

Melodramatic Mary

- ❒ Validate and support Mary's feelings.
- ❒ Ask Mary to present her ideas or suggestions.
- ❒ Bring attention back to the family's concerns.
- ❒
- ❒
- ❒

Blaming Bob

- ❒ Attempt to refocus on the task at hand through gentle interruption.
- ❒ Point out that the cause of a problem seldom leads to a solution.
- ❒ Ask Bob to focus on the future.
- ❒ Ask Bob to participate more politely.
- ❒
- ❒
- ❒

Minimizing Marsha

- ❒ Ask Marsha what she believes are the needs of the family.
- ❒ Gently ask Marsha what might happen if no change occurs in the family.
- ❒ Ask what Marsha wants most for the family.
- ❒
- ❒
- ❒

[7]Adapted with permission from E. Mary Grealish, *Virginia Wraparound Trainer Manual* (Community Partnership Group, 1994).

Handout 7: Addressing Challenging Behaviors (continued)

Silent Sandy

- ❒ Encourage Sandy's participation by asking what she thinks about the suggestions or solutions.
- ❒ Ask Sandy whether she has any specific family concerns she wants to share.
- ❒ Let Sandy know that you value and want her contributions.
- ❒
- ❒
- ❒

Negative Nick

- ❒ Gently interrupt Nick and ask other team members for their ideas.
- ❒ Thank Nick for his ideas, but ask him to give others a chance to participate.
- ❒
- ❒
- ❒

Talkative Ted

- ❒ Politely interrupt Ted, thank him for his suggestions, and ask him to give others a chance to speak.
- ❒ Give Ted a duty, such as taking notes on the team meeting .
- ❒
- ❒
- ❒

Mandate Mike

- ❒ Acknowledge the importance of knowing how the system is supposed to work.
- ❒ Point out to Mike your desire to work with him to make the system better.
- ❒ List ideas on a sheet of newsprint for making the system work for, instead of against, the family.
- ❒
- ❒
- ❒

Handout 8: Back Home Plans[8]

Instructions

Think about the partnership talk and joining strategies explored and discussed during the training. Using your notes and handouts to help you recall key ideas, note the strategies that really "made an impression on you" in the three sections below. When you are finished, go to the next page.

Section 1: Strategies I use now, but want to improve.

Section 2: Strategies I was aware of, but have not tried.

Section 3: Strategies totally new to me.

[8]Adapted with permission from Barbara Wolfe and Larry Edelman, *A Handful of Training Activities: A Survey of Adaptable Training Activities* (Eau Claire, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin).

Handout 8: Back Home Plans (continued)

Instructions

Look over the strategies you listed on the previous page. Select two or three that you want most to improve on or try out in your work with families. Then, record the strategies below, set target dates for improving or trying out the strategies, map out the steps you will take, and list the resources you might need along the way.

Strategy #1: _____

I want to improve or try out this strategy by this date: _____

Steps I will take:	Resources to help me achieve this step:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Strategy #2: _____

I want to improve or try out this strategy by this date: _____

Steps I will take:	Resources to help me achieve this step:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Strategy #3: _____

I want to improve or try out this strategy by this date: _____

Steps I will take:	Resources to help me achieve this step:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Mobilizing Family Strengths

Outcomes

As a result of completing this module, participants will:

- **Understand** and **practice** the strategies for exploring family strengths;
- **Reinforce** the skill of reframing in their work; and
- **Identify** key players in the lives of Head Start families.

Key Concepts

The key concepts of Module 3 that serve as a knowledge base for developing the skills needed for mobilizing the strengths of Head Start families include:

- **Family Strengths.** The strengths of the family are the elements most useful for helping families achieve their hopes for the future.
- **Reframing.** Reframing means being able to "build new windows" around families by highlighting their skills, gifts and capacities, rather than dwelling on their problems. Through reframing, families are helped to see problems as challenges which can be solved. Reframing releases a family's positive energy and, thereby, mobilizes the family to work on its challenges in new ways.
- **Key Players.** Key players are persons who know the family best and may be counted on as sources of support. Key players are involved in the family's everyday life and are invested in seeing the family's hopes and dreams become reality. A thorough assessment of family strengths includes identifying the key players in the life of the family.

Background Information

Many Head Start families have long histories of seeing themselves in terms of their problems. Often, that problem-oriented view is reinforced by traditional social service agencies. When families meet with service providers in the system, the focus is usually on family problems. The problem-oriented approach reinforces what is wrong with the family, not what is right with the family. As a result, families fail to recognize and realize their problem-solving capabilities. When we move away from only looking at family problems, we encourage family confidence and optimism. A strength-oriented approach is far different from the one most low-income families have traditionally experienced. A trusting partnership, built on family strengths, may take several weeks or even months to develop.

Family Strengths

The strengths of the family are the elements most useful for helping families achieve their hopes for the future. When we keep a focus on family strengths, we learn the good news about families. Family talents and capacities define our work, not labels or categories that imply deficits in family functioning.

There are many types of family strengths. Some family strengths include: adaptability, cohesion, humor, willingness to try, and networks of support. Any provider will find strengths in all areas of family life including family interests and activities; extended family and friends; religious, spiritual or cultural beliefs; family values and rules; employment and education; emotional or psychological well-being; physical health and nutrition; shelter and safety; income or money; and family interaction.

Head Start staff can become proficient at drawing out family strengths by: 1) believing that family strengths exist; 2) having conversations, not interviews, with the family; 3) asking the family process questions; 4) talking with the family about everyday things and listening to their responses; and 5) identifying and celebrating the family's successes.

A strength-oriented staff-family partnership is most likely achieved by Head Start staff exhibiting the following characteristics:

- Recognizing that they are the family's partner.

  Most helpers come to the family partnership-building process with their own expectations of what will be accomplished. However, in doing so, they are not adhering to the role of family partner. It is important to let the family set the agenda.

- Trusting the family.

  Each family member has its own unique set of experiences. The judgments, observations, and recommendations of family members deserve our attention and trust; they are based on a track record that precedes Head Start involvement with the family.

- Working with the family.

  Head Start families have invited us, or accepted a request from us, to be part of a process that is already going on in their lives. Working together in all aspects of what is being planned for a family is the way we show our respect for that privilege.

- Showing flexibility.

  Our own family history shapes our expectations about what families should be like. However, to form an effective family partnership, we must begin with and work toward meeting the family's expectations for its future. We also show flexibility by adapting our schedule to the family's schedule, whether or not family members are employed.

- Relating to the family as people.

  Using a style of interaction that is both comfortable for us and for the families we work with helps to communicate the message: "We all want to be treated as people. No one wants to be treated as a case."

- Looking at the whole picture.

  One individual does not make a family. One event does not make a history. We must always be aware of how easily that knowledge can slip away, unless we maintain a focus on the whole family picture.

- Displaying creativity and enthusiasm.

  There are many ways to accomplish the same thing. Creativity — finding different views of the same family picture or different paths to the same goal — produces a lively, strength-oriented family partnership.

Mobilizing Family Strengths

Mobilizing family strengths requires a special set of staff skills. Two key skills are reframing and identifying key players.

- Reframing

  Reframing means "building new windows" around families through an emphasis on family strengths; this means using language that reinforces family strengths, teaching families how to use their strengths, and encouraging success in families through a focus on what they can do. Reframing emphasizes strengths by:

  — Using language that shows respect for the family;

  — Avoiding language that may be offensive to the family; and

  — Using "people first" language such as "a family experiencing stress" instead of "a stressed out family," or "a child with disabilities" instead of a "disabled child."

  When working with families, many times staff fall into deficit-oriented patterns, which we can change through the skill of reframing. First, **we tend to label families and then think they can't improve their lives**. For example, when we use words such as "lazy," "dysfunctional," "unmotivated," and "uncooperative" to describe families, we are, in effect, saying the families' situations are unworkable. We're not seeing the **family as people**, nor are we seeing the **whole family picture**. In contrast, when we use the skill of reframing, we see the family as people with skills, talents, and capacities — we emphasize what the family does well.

Second, **we tend to do too much for families**. This is because it is easier to do things for families than to help them to do things for themselves. When we use the skill of reframing, we encourage families to use their strengths to achieve what they want in life, taking one small step at a time.

Finally, **we tend to pay too much attention to family problems**. Dealing with problems takes so much of our time and energy that we fail to build on family strengths. We don't pay enough attention to what families **can do** or what families **could accomplish**. When we use the skill of reframing, we build on family strengths by encouraging families to pursue areas that have high chances for success — areas that will give the families (and us) positive feedback for what they do well.

- Identifying Key Players

Key players, as supports for families, can have significant roles in helping families achieve their hopes for a better life. Identifying key players in the lives of Head Start families is a critical first step toward mobilizing family strengths. Key players:

— Are personally invested in the family;

— Are involved in the family's daily life in natural ways;

— Are accessible during times when the family is together; that is, after the work day and on weekends;

— Feel close to the family/have emotional ties to the family;

— Expect the family to have a life a good life and thereby bring enthusiasm to help the family move forward; and

— Show an unwavering commitment to the family.

Staff's role in involving key players in efforts to support the family will vary, depending upon each family's needs and desires. For some families, involving key players in staff-family partnerships may be necessary and desired. Other families may only need encouragement to be able to turn to key players for specific types of support.

The time involved in identifying key players — people who know the family best —is time well spent. The outcome of the process is likely to contribute significantly to the family's success in moving ahead.

Instructions

- **Preview** the videotape *A Design for Family Support.* Familiarize yourself with the videotape format and review all activities.
- **Use** the videotape as a supplement to the indicated activities. It is not meant to stand alone.
- **Use** part 4, of the videotape *Exploring Family Strengths* in Module 3, Activity 3-2.
- **Understand** that the families on this videotape are real families describing their actual situations. However, the names of the families have been changed.
- **Note** that this videotape was not developed by the Head Start Bureau. However, this videotape was field tested by trainers during in-service training sessions. This video tape was selected to diversify and broaden the training experience, and can be used in a variety of training situations.
- **Be prepared** for disagreements. The videotape segments may provoke many different reactions from participants, including both very positive and very negative reactions to the same consultant and the same family. Participants might even disagree about what actually happened and what issues were raised. Both the positive and negative aspects of the consultants' conversations with families provide opportunity for learning.

Activity 3-1: Defining Family Strengths

Purpose: To provide a framework for staff to use in identifying and assessing family strengths.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 1: *Areas of Family Strengths*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. *Introduce the activity.* Explain to staff that this activity will help them define, identify, and assess family strengths. Tell staff that family strengths are the elements most useful for helping families achieve their hopes for the future. You may want to review the concept of family strengths as outlined in the module's background information with staff.

2. (a) *Explore family strengths.* Explain that staff are going to begin with an exploration of strengths within their own families. Ask staff to reflect for a minute on the question:

   - What helps your family get through life's challenges?

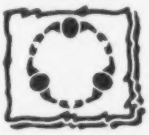
   (b) After giving staff time for self reflection, ask staff to call out their responses. As responses are called out, list them on a sheet of newsprint.

3. *Examine the areas of family strength.* Distribute handout 1. Point out that handout 1 provides a framework for identifying and categorizing areas of family strengths. Go back to the responses to the question listed on the sheet of newsprint. Guide staff through a process of categorizing the responses listed on newsprint into the appropriate sections of the handout.

4. *Debrief the activity.* When the process is completed, point out that staff now have a tool to help them identify strengths in Head Start families; recorded responses serve as examples of family strengths.

5. *Close the activity.* Bring the activity to an end by asking staff whether they have any comments or questions. Point out that in the upcoming activity staff will focus on ways to explore family strengths.

Activity 3-2: Exploring Family Strengths



Purpose: To demonstrate how family strengths can be discovered and reinforced during conversations with families.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 2: *Strategies for Exploring Family Strengths*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape
- VCR/Monitor
- Videotape, *A Design for Family Support* (Part 4, *Exploring Family Strengths*[1])

Trainer Preparation Note: Before conducting this workshop activity, please consult the instructions at the beginning of Module 3.

1. *Introduce the activity.* Provide a brief introduction on family strengths, using the module's background information. Recording responses on newsprint, ask staff the following questions:

   - How do you feel when others only focus on your weaknesses?
   - How do you feel when your strengths are recognized?

2. *Introduce the videotape.* Tell staff that they are now going to focus on the strategies of bringing out the strengths in families. Explain that they will watch a videotape segment *Exploring Family Strengths,* which shows family consultants having unrehearsed conversations with real families. Instruct staff to look for ways the consultants encourage the families to reveal their strengths and successes as they tell their stories. Begin the videotape.

Trainer Preparation Note: The focus of the videotape is not on the children, but on the children's families — their strengths and successes.

3. *Debrief the video.* Stop the videotape at the "pause for discussion" frame. Encourage staff to react to the segment by raising questions such as these:

   - The videotape emphasized these family strengths: adaptability, cohesion, humor, willingness to keep talking, and networks of

[1]Adapted with permission from *Exploring Family Strengths*, prod. Jana Staton, ed. by Kathy Herr, Heritage Production, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Foundation, 1994, videotape.

support. How have these strengths surfaced in your work with Head Start families? Are there other strengths you find in your work with families? What are some examples?

- What is your reaction to the statement: Most of what a family is doing can be seen as a strength. Do you find this statement to be true in your work with families? What are some exceptions?
- Are most of the families you work with aware of their strengths?
- How might a greater emphasis on family strengths affect the families you work with?

Trainer Preparation Note: You may find it helpful to replay parts or all of this videotape segment, as the discussion proceeds.

4. *Continue the activity.* Explain to staff that the next segment of the videotape focuses on ways to help families explore their strengths. Resume playing the videotape.

5. *Discuss strategies for exploring strengths in families.* Stop the videotape at the "pause for discussion" frame. Distribute and review handout 2. Encourage discussion on how staff might apply the strategies shown on the videotape to their work with families by raising questions such as these:

   - How has focusing on family strengths helped you in your work with families?
   - Are there times in your work when you must gather specific information about a family? How do those times fit with having conversations, not interviews, with families? How might you adapt a conversation with a family to get information you need?
   - What are some examples of open-ended, or process questions you use in your work with families? How has this method made a difference?
   - What is wrong with asking questions that begin with the word "why"? What kinds of feelings do "why" questions create? *(Give an example, such as: "Why did you do that?" Probe for the ways "why" questions put people on the defensive, imply wrong-doing, and communicate a judgmental attitude.)*
   - Have you ever celebrated a family's success in your work? What kind of family success gave cause for celebration? How did you celebrate the success? How did the celebration make you feel? How did it make the family feel?

Trainer Preparation Note: Steps 6 and 7 are optional. Use this section to enhance the training. This portion of the activity can be conduced with the activity or at a later date.

6. (a) *Practice exploring family strengths.* Explain that this videotape segment shows Nancy Boyd-Franklin, a family consultant, in conversation with the Johnson family. In the Johnson family, the grandmother and the great-grandmother are raising three children ages 2, 3, and 4.

   (b) Show the videotape. Suggest that staff take notes as they watch the videotape; document what the family consultant does to bring out the strengths in the Johnson family.

7. *Debrief the videotape.* Stop the videotape at the "pause from discussion" frame. Begin the debriefing by asking staff for their reactions to the segment just shown. Use the questions below as a guide:

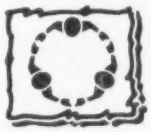
   - What about the Johnson family made the greatest impression on you? About the family consultant?
   - What strategies did the consultant use to explore family strengths? What would you have done differently?
   - How did the Johnson family respond to the family consultant's strategies? How do you think the Johnson family felt after the conversation?

8. (a) *Close the activity.* In bringing the activity to an end, ask the following:

   - Have you ever worked with a family that seemed to have few, if any, strengths? Have you ever worked with a family that seemed unable to recognize its strengths? Do you think you used the right strategies for exploring family strengths with the family? What might you have done differently?

   (b) Reinforce that by exploring family strengths, we build family confidence.

Activity 3-3: Practicing the Skill of Reframing



Purpose: To develop skills in using language that describes and reinforces the strengths in families.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 3: *Reframing Common Terms*
- Handout 4: *Reframing the Marcus Family*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. *Introduction.* Present a brief overview on the skill of reframing based on the module's key concepts and background information.

2. *Discuss reframing.* Distribute and review handout 3. Explain that the handout provides examples of common terms reframed as strengths.

> **Trainer Preparation Note:** The reframed statements in handout 3 encourage staff to see problems in new ways. At the same time, it is important for staff to realize that reframing is not denial of serious issues in a family. Rather, reframing helps to identify some positive aspects of an issue, which staff and families might otherwise overlook.

3. (a) *Prepare staff for a small group activity.* Explain that in the upcoming activity staff will form small groups and practice the skill of reframing. Distribute handout 4, which they will use during the activity, and go over the instructions.

   (b) Point out that the description of the Marcus family includes words/phrases that contribute to negative attitudes, misconceptions, and assumptions about families; staff have probably heard, read, or even used these same words/phrases. In rewriting the description of the Marcus family, you want the small groups not only to emphasize the strengths in the family, but also to:

   - Use language that shows respect for the family;
   - Avoid language that may be offensive to the family; and
   - Use "people first language," such as "a family experiencing stress" instead of "a stressed out family," or "a child with disabilities" instead of a "disabled child."

4. *Conduct the activity.* Form three or more small groups. Ask each group to appoint a facilitator and a recorder. Distribute sheets of newsprint, markers, and tape to each group. Assign a different paragraph, from the description of the Marcus family, to each small group. (If you have more than three groups, re-assign the paragraphs.)

> **Trainer Preparation Note:** Keep the groups focused on the task of reframing instead of straying into a discussion on solving the Marcus family's problems.

5. (a) *Process the activity.* After 20 minutes, reconvene the large group to hear the small groups' new descriptions of the Marcus family. To start, have staff react to the reframing task just completed by asking the following:

   - Did you find the task easy or difficult?

   (b) Read the first paragraph of the Marcus family description, as originally written on handout 4. Ask staff:

   - How would you feel if your family was described in this way?

   (c) Ask reporters from the group working on the first paragraph to read its reframed description of the Marcus family. Ask staff:

   - How would you feel if your family was described in this way?

   (d) Repeat the same process for the second and third paragraphs of the Marcus family description.

6. *Close the activity.* In ending the activity, make the following points:

   - Suggest that staff make a commitment to help each other watch out for language that spurs negative images of Head Start families, and to compliment each other when reframing occurs.

   - Stress that reframing or "building new windows" around families is both a skill and an art. Breaking deficit-oriented patterns and emphasizing family strengths requires practice and patience.

   - Note that reframing does not mean that family "problems" are ignored, avoided, or discounted; rather, reframing acknowledges and reinforces the family's capacity to solve problems.

Activity 3-4: Skill Development in Reframing

Purpose: To provide staff with practice in reframing families in terms of their strengths and capabilities.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 3: *Reframing Common Terms*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape
- Paper/Pencil

Coach Preparation Note: Divide a sheet of paper for note-taking into two columns. Label one column "deficits" and the other "strengths." As staff describe the families, listen for words, phrases, or terms that provoke: 1) negative family images and record them in the "deficits" column; and 2) positive family images and record them in the "strengths" column. If necessary, encourage detailed descriptions.

1. *Introduce the activity.* Discuss the purpose of this activity with staff and how you will work together to complete its steps.

2. (a) *Discussion on strengths and deficits.* Ask each participant to describe a Head Start family he/she knows well. Explain that you will take some notes about the families as staff describe them.

   (b) Discuss the family descriptions provided by staff. Go over the two columns of notes with staff and emphasize the following points:

   - The primary way staff describe the family (i.e., from a deficit and problem-oriented view or from a strength and "can do" view);
   - Negative assumptions about families, as suggested by the list in the deficits column (e.g., the family is too hard to work with; the family is inadequate; the parents are not "good parents"; the children are out of control);
   - Language that devalues or shows disrespect for the family (as suggested by the list in the "deficits" column) versus language that shows the family is valued and respected (as suggested by the list in the "strengths" column);
   - The importance of using "people first language," such as "a child with epilepsy" instead of "an epileptic child" or "a family experiencing stress" instead of "an overwhelmed family."

(c) Ask the question:

- How would you feel if your family was described from a deficit perspective rather than from a strengths-perspective?

3. (a) *Explain the skill of reframing.* Provide staff with a brief overview of the skill of reframing from the module's background information. Explain that reframing means "building new windows" around families through an emphasis on family strengths; this means using language that reinforces family strengths, helping families to use their strengths, and encouraging success in families through a focus on what they can do .

> **Coach Preparation Note:** The reframed statements in handout 3 encourage staff to see problems in new ways. At the same time, it is important for staff to realize that reframing is not denial of serious issues in a family. Rather, reframing helps to identify some positive aspects of an issue that staff and families might otherwise overlook.

(b) To help staff understand the task of reframing, refer them to handout 3, which shows how terms, commonly used to describe families, can be reframed as strengths. Encourage staff to add examples to the handout.

4. *Practice reframing.* Bring staff attention back to the list of words, phrases, and terms in the column of notes labeled "deficits." Take four or five examples from the list and write them on newsprint. Ask staff for one or two ways that each example might be reframed as a family strength and record their responses on the newsprint.

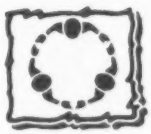
5. (a) *Apply the skill of reframing.* As homework, instruct staff to choose a Head Start family and describe the family from a strengths perspective, using reframing when necessary.

(b) Establish a time for staff to report back with the reframing exercise.

6. *Debrief the homework.* When you meet again, review the completed assignment. Give staff the opportunity to raise questions or issues concerning the skill of reframing. Celebrate staff progress in reframing the family. Encourage staff to continue practicing the skill of reframing.

7. *Close the activity.* Stress that skill in reframing families comes with lots of practice; deficit or problem-oriented patterns of describing and working with families takes time to correct. Point out opportunities that staff have to make colleagues more aware of family strengths.

Activity 3-5: Identifying Key Players in the Lives of Families



Purpose: To provide staff with strategies for identifying natural helpers who are part, or can become part, of the family's support system.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 5: *Strategies for Identifying Key Players in the Family's Life*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. *Introduce the activity.* Point out that family strengths extend beyond the immediate family unit to key players in the life of a family. Emphasize key players are people the family can count on, or turn to, as sources of support; key players are often overlooked as resources in families. Explain that in this activity, staff will explore strategies for identifying key players in the lives of Head Start families.

2. (a) *Brainstorm key players.* Ask staff to think about a difficult time in their own life — this may be a time from the past or the present. (Situations that might apply include the death of a loved one, a divorce, a move, the loss of a job, illness of a relative, financial stress, etc.)

   (b) After a minute or two of self-reflection, ask staff to call out responses to the question: Who can you count on to see your family through a stressful time? As responses are called out, list them on a sheet of newsprint.

3. *Explore the characteristics of key players.* Encourage staff to comment on their reasons for including the people on the newsprint list. Note that key players:

   - Are personally invested in seeing the family achieve its hopes for a better life;
   - Are involved in the family's daily life in natural ways;
   - Are accessible during times when the family is together; that is, after the work day and on weekends;
   - Feel close to the family/have emotional ties to the family;
   - Expect the family to have a good life and thereby bring enthusiasm to help the family move forward; and
   - Show an unwavering commitment to the family.

4. (a) *Identifying key players.* Explain that the group is now going to take a close look at ways to identify key players in the life of a Head Start family. Remind the group of the ground rules for maintaining the confidentiality of families discussed during the training program.

   (b) Ask for a volunteer to come forward and describe a Head Start family that he/she thinks has few, if any, key players. Encourage the group to ask the volunteer questions about the family in order to obtain a complete picture. Make sure that the strengths in the family are identified during the process. As the family is described, take notes on newsprint.

   (c) Distribute handout 5 and go through the list of strategies. Encourage staff to talk about the ways they might actually carry out the strategies in their work with families. Make sure that staff realize that key players may be identified through observing the family, as well as through process questions raised during family visits.

   (d) Instruct the group, using handout 5 as a guide, to identify the key players of the Head Start family described in part b. Note that staff may need to ask more questions of the volunteer. Begin discussion by asking:

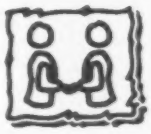
   - Who are the key players in this Head Start family?
   - What strategies can we use to identify other key players?

5. *Debrief the activity.* Give staff time to ask questions or to comment on strategies discussed during the activity.

6. *Close the activity.* Conclude the activity with the following points:

   - Key players, as sources of support, can have significant roles in helping families achieve their hopes for a better life. Identifying key players in the lives of Head Start families is a critical first step toward mobilizing family strengths.
   - Your role in involving key players in efforts to support the family will vary, depending upon each family's needs and desires. For some families, involving key players in Head Start team meetings, or in your family visits, may be necessary and desired. Other families may only need your encouragement to be able to turn to key players for specific types of support.
   - The time involved in identifying key players — people who know the family best — is time well spent. The outcome of the process is likely to contribute significantly to the family's success in moving ahead.

Activity 3-6: Skill Development in Exploring Family Strengths and Identifying Key Players



Purpose: To encourage the development of a strength-oriented partnership between staff and a Head Start family.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 1: *Areas of Family Strengths*
- Handout 2: *Strategies for Exploring Family Strengths*
- Handout 5: *Strategies for Identifying Key Players in the Family's Life*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

Session 1

1. *Introduce the activity.* Explain the purpose of this two-session activity and ask staff to write down some information on a family with whom they are currently working, including a brief description of the family's composition, current situation, and strengths.

2. *Begin the activity.* Have staff describe the family and their involvement with the family to date.

3. (a) *Involve staff in self-evaluation.* Write the following points on a sheet of newsprint:

   - Recognize they are the family's partner;
   - Trust and support the family's own judgments, observations, and ideas for growth;
   - Work with the family, instead of for the family;
   - Consider the family's schedule when setting up visits/ appointments;
   - Relate to the family as people, rather than as clients or a case;
   - Have a good grasp of the whole family picture; and
   - Show enthusiasm and creativity in efforts to support the family.

   Go over the points as examples of staff characteristics necessary to promote a strength-oriented staff-family partnership.

   (b) Ask staff to evaluate their work with the selected family in terms of each point. On newsprint, take notes as you go through the process. As the self-critique unfolds, reinforce strengths that staff see in themselves, while also reinforcing/pointing out ways that staff might approach the family differently.

4. (a) *Develop strategies for exploring family strengths.* Review the concept of family strengths as it appears in the module's background information. Tell staff that strengths can be found in many areas of a family's life. Distribute and review handout 1.

   (b) Refer staff to handout 2 and go over the strategies for exploring family strengths. Have staff circle two or three strategies on the handout that they would like to try out or refine in their work with the selected family. Talk about the circled strategies, within the context of the selected family.

5. (a) *Assign homework.* Ask staff to set up a time to visit the selected family within the next few weeks. Explain that you want staff to complete the following assignment during the visit. Suggest staff take notes on the assignment, as you present it.

   - Use the strategies discussed to identify family strengths;
   - Identify at least one family strength, not previously identified, and bring it to the family's attention; and
   - Identify at least one strength, not previously identified, in each member of the family and bring these strengths to the family's attention.

   (b) After making sure the assignment is clear to staff, set up a time for a debriefing.

6. *Debrief the homework assignment.* Once the staff visit is complete meet with staff. Ask staff to give you the details of their visits with the selected family, including a critique of their success in completing the assignment. Look carefully at the process; that is, at what staff said or did and how the families responded.

Session 2

1. *Conduct a follow-up session.* Provide staff with an overview of key players as described in the module's background information. Distribute and review handout 5. Have staff circle two strategies to identify key players that they would like to try out or refine in their work with families.

2. (a) *Assign homework.* Ask staff to set up a second visit with the selected family. Explain that you want staff to complete the following assignment during the visit. Suggest staff take notes on the assignment, as you present it.

   - Talk with the family about the importance of key players;

- Use the two strategies noted on handout 5 to identify key players in the family's life, not previously identified, and bring it to the family's attention.

(b) Set up a time with staff for debriefing/closing session.

3. *Debrief the homework..* When staff complete the assignment, together analyze the process. Identify areas where staff can improve their skills in identifying key players and what can be done in the future.

4. *Close the activity.* Bring the activity to an end by asking staff whether they have any comments or questions. Reinforce the importance of working with families from a strengths perspective.

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Follow-up activities to reinforce the concepts and skills taught in Module 3 are presented below. After completing Module 3, review the activities with staff and help them choose at least one to work on individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

- **Making Back Home Plans**

  Provide staff with handout 6, which they can use to record ideas and plans for professional development. Suggest that staff who have the same or similar job responsibilities form a peer support group to discuss strategies for mobilizing family strengths and ways to achieve their professional goals. As an option to forming a peer support group, suggest that staff talk with colleagues about what they learned from the training, ideas they would like to implement, and professional skills they would like to develop.

- **Watching Our Language**

  Over the course of the next two weeks, ask staff to watch for negative or disrespectful language used to describe Head Start families. They should look for such language in written reports, Head Start staff meetings, informal staff conversations, and their own work with families. Instruct staff to keep a two-week log of the language, that is, of words, phrases, or terms they read, hear, or find themselves using. Set a time to go over the entries in the log with staff. In reviewing the log, ask staff to reframe each entry in a more positive and respectful way. Have staff identify some steps they can take to encourage the Head Start community to watch its language. For example, staff might develop and distribute a list, similar to the one in handout 3, that shows their log entries reframed as strengths.

- **Drawing Out Key Players in the Life of a Family**

  Discuss ways that staff can find key players in a life of a family during family assessment, service planning, and related activities. Have staff practice conversations with families aimed at identifying and gaining access to key players. Using handout 5 as a guide, develop a list of open-ended process questions with staff that could be used during conversations with families to identify key players. Ask staff to have an actual conversation with a family about key players and to report back to you on the results.

Handout 1: Areas of Family Strengths[2]

Overview

The strengths of the family are the elements most useful for helping families achieve their hopes for the future. As you develop partnerships with Head Start families, look for family strengths in the following areas:

- **Family interests and activities** - sources of family fun and recreation, what the family likes to do.
- **Extended family and friends** - sources of informal support, people the family can count on.
- **Religious, spiritual, or cultural beliefs** - what the family believes in, ways that the family shows its beliefs.
- **Family values and rules** - what is important to the family, such as always stick together or being nice to one another.
- **Employment and education** - what family members are best at in their work (including housework), favorite school subjects, special skills and talents.
- **Emotional/psychological well-being** - what makes the family feel happy, what helps the family feel better.
- **Physical health and nutrition** - the physical health of family members, preventive health care practices.
- **Shelter and safety** - adequate and safe living arrangements, home and neighborhood atmosphere.
- **Income/money management** - sources of family income, shopping practices.
- **Family interaction** - communication patterns, coping strategies, parenting skills.

[2]Adapted with permission from E. Mary Grealish, *Virginia Wrap Around Trainer Manual* (Community Partnership Group, 1994).

Handout 2: Strategies for Exploring Family Strengths[3]

Overview

Below are some strategies for drawing out strengths in families.

- ❑ Believe that family strengths exist.
- ❑ Have conversations or chats with the family, not interviews.
- ❑ Ask process questions:
  - ✔ How did you do that?
  - ✔ Can you tell me about that?
  - ✔ Can you say a little bit more about that?
- ❑ Talk about everyday things.
- ❑ Identify and celebrate the family's successes.
- ❑ Tell the family how remarkable it is.
- ❑ Keep a focus on learning the good news about the family.
- ❑ Relate to the family as people, not as clients or a case.
- ❑ Remember that the family is the senior partner.
- ❑ Carefully observe verbal and non-verbal communication.
- ❑ Listen to stories about the family.
- ❑ Meet at times and places that are comfortable to the family (e.g., home, workplace, coffee shop, park).
- ❑ Avoid taking notes. If notes are necessary, ask for the family's permission. Before you leave, make a copy of all notes and offer them to the family.

[3]Adapted with permission from E. Mary Grealish, *Virginia Wraparound Trainer Manual* (Community Partnership Group, 1994).

Handout 3: Reframing Common Terms[4]

Overview

Reframing means "building new windows" around families through an emphasis on family strengths; this means using language that reinforces family strengths, teaching families how to use their strengths, and encouraging success in families through a focus on what they can do.

Instructions

Look over the two columns below. In the left column are terms often used to describe families/family members; these terms devalue family strengths and reinforce a deficit-oriented view of the family. In the right column are examples of ways the same terms can be reframed as strengths. Try to come up with some other reframed examples, as you go through the list; add one or two terms you use often and reframe them.

Common Terms	Reframed as Strengths
1. Family resists assistance	1. Family can address its own needs
2. Family is dysfunctional	2. Family is dealing with many issues
3. Family is isolated	3. Family is very private
4. Parents are too demanding	4. Parents are good advocates, they know how to make things happen
5. Parents dote on their child	5. Parents love their child
6. Parents are unmotivated	6. Parents are happy with their lives
7. Parents are uncooperative	7. Parents take pride in being independent
8. Parents are over-protective	8. Parents care a lot about their child
9. Parents are angry	9. Parents can express their feelings
10.	10.
11.	11.
12.	12.

[4]Adapted with permission from E. Mary Grealish, *Virginia Wraparound Trainer Manual* (Community Partnership Group, 1994).

Handout 4: Reframing the Marcus Family

Instructions

Your group has the task of reframing one paragraph in the following description of the Marcus family. The description, as it reads now, emphasizes the family's deficits. Rewrite or reframe the description to emphasize the family's strengths; make sure to use "people first" language and language showing respect for the family. Your group has 20 minutes to develop the new version.

Marcus Family

The Marcus family, plagued with multiple problems, is well known to Head Start and community agencies. Ms. Mary Marcus, the 34-year-old mother, has three illegitimate children, ages 3, 4, and 5. She currently lives with an unemployed boyfriend, Jim Sims. Mr. Sims recently punished the youngest child, Joshua, by putting him in a dark closet for a couple of hours. He insists that was reasonable discipline and is proud of this and other discipline ideas he has tried. Ms. Marcus told Joshua's Head Start teacher about the incident, which prompted an investigation by Child Protective Services (CPS). Mr. Sims' departure from the home seems likely now, since CPS told Ms. Marcus she could lose her children if Mr. Sims stayed. The conditions in the Marcus' home are disgusting. Ms. Marcus is an irresponsible housekeeper, who spends most of her free-time reading mystery novels and religious books. She is overwhelmed by economic and emotional demands of her situation, although she tries hard to keep up with the children's needs. She once made the comment that she would like to be a better parent.

The Marcus family is on welfare. Ms. Marcus dropped out of school when she was 16 to care for her mother, who was dying of cancer. Although Ms. Marcus says she would like to get a GED, she is academically weak and would need considerable help. Ms. Marcus also says she would like to get a job. She wants a part-time job as a seamstress, since she knows how to sew and mend clothes, but this seems unrealistic in light of her personal problems and failure to follow through with suggestions. Ms. Marcus' aunt occasionally takes care of the three children, but she refuses to help with the housework. There is also a girlfriend named Bess who used to go bowling with Ms. Marcus until Mr. Sims showed up. Ms. Marcus likes to be helpful to people. She was once very active as a church volunteer, but withdrew because she felt church members were rude to her because of her obnoxious and disruptive children. She wants to join another church.

All three children in the Marcus family are enrolled in Head Start. They are attractive, but aggressive and demanding children, who show the effects of being reared in a dysfunctional family. The children's acting-out behaviors are of concern to both Head Start staff and Ms. Marcus. In addition, the middle child, Leslie, has a speech defect, which makes it hard to understand her. She tends to repeat her words over and over, until she's finally understood. Ms. Marcus seems unmotivated to get Leslie involved in speech therapy, although she brought up the subject once to Leslie's Head Start teacher. Ms. Marcus blames herself for the children's failure in Head Start; she's been told the children are smart and capable of achieving more. She says she's depressed about not being able to give her children the life she wants for them.

Handout 5: Strategies for Identifying Key Players in the Family's Life[5]

Overview

A thorough assessment of family strengths includes identifying key players in the life of the family. Key players are people who know the family best and may be counted on as sources of support. Key players are involved in the family's life in natural ways; they have a personal investment in seeing the family succeed. Some strategies for identifying them are listed below.

- ❑ Explore whom the family sees as "family."
- ❑ Ask family members to tell you who is important to them in their daily lives.
- ❑ Talk with family members about whom they see and talk to most often.
- ❑ Ask family members to discuss people they can count on by sharing an example of ways that key players are part of the family.
- ❑ Ask the family about obvious people who may be overlooked because of their proximity (e.g., next-door neighbors).
- ❑ Explore the family's hobbies and activities, since key players are usually tied to the family's interests.
- ❑ Spend time with family members in different community settings (e.g., the park, the recreation center, the church).
- ❑ Explore key players through others (e.g., teachers, other Head Start families).
- ❑ Explore ways that family members help out others.

[5]Adapted with permission from E. Mary Grealish, *Virginia Wraparound and Trainer Manual* (Community Partnership Group, 1994).

Handout 6: Back Home Plans[6]

Instructions

Think about the various strategies for identifying family strengths and resources explored and discussed during the training . Using your notes and handouts to help you recall key ideas, record the strategies that really made an impression on the three sections below. When you are finished, go on to the next page.

Section 1: Strategies I use now, but want to improve.

Section 2: Strategies I was aware of, but have never tried.

Section 3: Strategies totally new to me.

[6]Adapted with permission from Barbara Wolfe and Larry Edelman, *A Handful of Training Activities: Survey of Adaptable Training Activities.* (Eau Claire, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin).

Handout 6: Back Home Plans (continued)

Instructions:

Look over the strategies you listed on the previous page. Select two or three that you want most to improve on or try out in your work with families. Then, record the strategies below, set target dates for improving or trying out the strategies, map out the steps you will take, and list the resources you might need along the way.

Strategy #1: _____

I want to improve or try out this strategy by this date: _____

Steps I will take:	Resources to help me achieve this step:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Strategy #2: _____

I want to improve or try out this strategy by this date: _____

Steps I will take:	Resources to help me achieve this step:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Strategy #3: _____

I want to improve or try out this strategy by this date: _____

Steps I will take:	Resources to help me achieve this step:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Activities, which Head Start agencies may find useful for reinforcing and expanding staff training on *A Design for Family Support*, are presented below.

Informal Learning Activities

Encourage staff to learn more about family partnership work through ongoing review of relevant professional journals, newsletters, articles, videotapes, and computerized on-line information systems. (Some suggestions are provided in the resources section of this guide.) Meet with staff on a weekly or bi-weekly basis to discuss what they learned from the media review and its application to their work.

Formal Learning Activities

Encourage staff to participate in continuing professional education programs, or professional degree programs, which focus on intervention with families. Courses in social work, family counseling, family life, and parent education are likely to be particularly useful to staff. In your search for appropriate training programs/courses, contact local universities and colleges, professional associations and organizations, family preservation and support agencies, and the Head Start National Teaching Centers. Look specifically for programs or courses that stress a family-centered, community-based, systems approach to working with families.

Peer Study Groups

Assist staff in forming ongoing study groups, where members read professional literature, watch videotapes, and/or invite experts to speak about various aspects of family partnership work. Afterwards, members of the study group exchange information, share viewpoints, and discuss practices relevant to their work with families.

Community Study

Develop a plan with staff for learning more about community agencies, organizations, and individuals involved in family support activities. Steps might include: conducting interviews/visits with various community leaders and service providers; holding debriefing sessions on the outcome of the interviews/visits; and identifying strategies for forming or improving community support for Head Start families.

Resources

The resources for family partnership work, listed below can help trainers, supervisors, and staff advance their professional development. Collectively, the resources have influenced the development of family support. Trainers and coaches need to be familiar with the resources and make their availability known to participants who wish further information.

Books and Journals

- Allen, Mary Lee, Patricia Brown, and Belva Finlay. *Helping Children by Strengthening Families - A Look at Family Support Programs.* Washington, DC: Children's Defense Fund, 1992.

  This report provides child advocates and others who work for children's well-being, a clearer idea of what family support programs do, how they operate, and why they are effective- not just for low-income families or families with serious problems, but for all families. The authors focus on strengthening the families' ability to nurture their children physically, emotionally, and intellectually, and enabling parents to respond early to children's multiple needs, within the family, and before healthy development is compromised. For information on obtaining this report call the Children's Defense Fund at 202/628-8787.

- Dunst, Carl, Carol Trivette, and Angela Deal. *Enabling and Empowering Families: Principles and Guidelines for Practice.* Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books, 1988.

  This book, written for early intervention practitioners, summarizes the basic principles of social and family systems theory. The meaning of need and the ways in which needs influence behavior are discussed. The differences between formal and informal resources and the ways families use these resources are also described. The effects of different "helping styles" on individual and family functioning is presented. This publication is available from Brookline Books, P.O. Box 1047, Cambridge, MA 02238, 617/868-0360.

Information Systems

- *HandsNet.* 20195 Stevens Creek Boulevard, Suite 120, Cupertino, CA 95014.

  HandsNet is an online information system for human service providers. More than 4,000 organizations and professionals subscribe and make use of online information on children, youth and families; federal budget and policy; community issues; resources; health issues; housing and community development; legal services; and rural poverty and development. *HandsNet* also has a number of forums for information exchanges, networking and collaboration among subscribers. For more information, contact: *HandsNet* at 408/257-4500.

Resources

Magazines and Newsletters

- *The Family Resource Coalition Report.* 200 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 1520, Chicago, IL 60604 .

  This report is published three times each year by the Family Resource Coalition and provides information on developments in family support across the United States. The FRC report includes short articles on family resources and support programs. For more information call 312/341-0900.

- *The National Association for Family-Based Services (NAFBS) Newsletter.* The National Association of Family-Based Services, 1513 Stoney Point Road, NW, Cedar Rapids IA 52405.

  This quarterly newsletter is for direct services staff and administrators of family-centered services in public or private agencies. Each issue is thematic and includes developments in States by regions. For more information call 319/396-4829.

Organizations

- *Family Resource Coalition (FRC).* 200 South Michigan Avenue, 16th Floor, Chicago, IL 60604.

  FRC, founded in 1981, is a national federation of more than 2,000 organizations and individuals promoting the development of prevention-oriented, community-based programs to strengthen families. In 1991, FRC was awarded a Federal grant to operate a National Resource Center for Family Support Programs, which serves as an information clearinghouse and a training and technical assistance resource. It publishes a quarterly newsletter, the *Family Resource Coalition Report,* and a resource directory of programs. FRC also has a Latino Caucus. FRC can be contacted by phone 312/341-0900 or by fax 312/341-9361.

- *National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).* 1509 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036.

  NAEYC offers professional development opportunities to early childhood educators to improve the quality of services to children from birth to age 8. NAEYC publishes a quarterly journal; conducts annual conferences; provides information and resources on child development and public policy affecting young children; and administers a national, voluntary accreditation system for child care centers and schools. Additional information can be obtained by contacting NAEYC at 202/232-8777.

- *National Association for Family-Based Services (NAFBS).* 1513 Stoney Point Road, NW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52405.

  Established in 1984, the NAFBS is an organization of more than 1000 professionals committed to a family-centered approach in public and private sector human services and in social policy. NAFBS holds an annual

conference, publishes resources for family based services, including a quarterly newsletter, and advocates for families and a family-centered approach to social policy and services at Federal, State, and local levels. For more information call 319/396-4829.

- *National Head Start Association (NHSA).* 1651 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

  NHSA focuses on issues that shape the future of Head Start and uses its national voice to inform communities, states, businesses, and federal lawmakers of its concerns. Major activities of NHSA include education and advocacy on behalf of Head Start children, families, and programs. For further information contact NHSA at 703/739-0875.

- *National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice.* University of Iowa School of Social Work, 112 North Hall, Iowa City, IA 52242-1223.

  This resource center focuses on the delivery of family preservation and family support services. The Center collects, reviews, and disseminates research on the relative merits of different program approaches; provides techniques and strategies to help decision makers assess options for developing family-based services; and fosters effective linkages between family support and public child welfare agencies. For more information call 319/335-22[illegible].

Audiovisual

- *Building a Family Partnership.* Listening to Families Project. Produced by Jana Staton. Edited by Kathy Herr, Heritage Production. American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Foundation, 1994. Videotape.

  Exploring Family Strengths. Listening to Families Project. Produced by Jana Staton. Edited by Kathy Herr, Heritage Production. American Association for Marriage and family Therapy Foundation, 1994. Videotape.

  The above videotapes are part of the Listening to Families project developed through a grant from the US Department of Education. The series focuses on supporting families with special needs children. Excerpts of conversations between families and family consultants demonstrate the skills of building a family partnership and exploring family strengths. Trainers, coaches, and staff can obtain the Listening to Families series by contacting Child Development Media, Inc., 5632 Van Nuys Boulevard, Suite 2687, Van Nuys, CA, 91401, 818/994-0933.

- *Our Families, Our Future.* Written, directed, and produced by Roger Weisberg. Host Walter Cronkite. Public Policy Production, Inc. and WNET, 1993. 60 minutes. Documentary.

  This one hour documentary puts a human face on the problems facing the American family and examines programs that are part of the family support

movement, which offers comprehensive services for both parents and children. By highlighting multi-generational programs, this documentary reveals how supporting and strengthening families is the key to solving may of the nation's most serious problems. Trainers, coaches, and staff can obtain the one hour documentary by contacting WNET, P.O. Box 2284, South Burlington, VT 05407 at 1/800-336-1917.

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